SUNDAY
March 26, 2023

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

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Vol.54 • No.13

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In hill State, point and shoot plastic

Uttarakhand is implementing a QR code-based project to prevent littering the Char Dham route with plastic bottles and packets

Hill cleansing: Employees of a Hyderabad-based start-up gathering plastic bottles brought from Kedarnath for recycling. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Small steps can bring big changes. The Uttarakhand government has chosen the Char Dham yatra route that covers temples at Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri to implement a unique waste-disposal system in the Himalayas, Uttarakhand Tourism Secretary Sachin Kurve has said.

Hemkund Sahib and the Valley of Flowers will also see the implementation of a QR code-based system that will streamline collection of waste and reduction of garbage along the route.

Visitors will scan a QR code on each plastic bottle and multi-layer plastic bag (of chips or biscuits) and pay a deposit over the maximum retail price (MRP). They can claim this amount back as a refund when they deposit the waste at a point at the end of the yatra. Up to 45 lakh QR codes are expected to be printed this year.

The idea and execution is being carried out by Recykal, a Hyderabad-based start-up that provides software solutions for better recycling and sustainability.

Earlier this year, Uttarakhand and Recykal won silver for the project, in the Digital India Awards under the category of a government's digital initiatives in collaboration with start-ups.

Last year, the project was piloted during the summer months, and executed compulsorily in Kedarnath, *en route* to the centuries-old Siva temple on the banks of the Mandakini river at an altitude of 3,584 metres above sea level. It was done only on plastic bottles and 94,000 QR codes were distributed among traders on the way. The initiative across a 33-km stretch from Guptakashi to the Kedarnath temple reached 546 shops, 334 eateries, and 94 hotels during the six-month duration of the yatra.

"Those who returned bottles included consumers, sanitation workers, mule owners and palanquin riders. If there were bottles that were not returned, the extra money collected was put in a corpus," said Sushma Sharma, the local representative of Recykal in Rudraprayag.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7

Centre pressed for disqualification out of panic, says Rahul

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi speaking in New Delhi on Saturday. R.V. MOORTHY

Labelling his disqualification from the Lok Sabha as a "panic reaction" of a government afraid of his "next speech" in Parliament on industrialist Gautam Adani, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday called it the "best gift" the government could give him.

With Youth Congress cadres raising slogans on the lawns of the party's headquarters at 24 Akbar Road here, Mr. Gandhi addressed a 30-minute press conference, saying Mr. Adani and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a close relationship and alluding to a direct connection between the BJP and the alleged fraudulent financial transactions in the industrialist's shell companies.

Mr. Gandhi dismissed his "disqualification" as a non-event, insisting that he would continue to speak the truth inside and outside Parliament. "Please understand why I have been disqualified... I have been disqualified because the Prime Minister is scared of my next speech on Adani, I have seen it in his eyes. He is terrified of the next speech and he doesn't want my next speech to be in Parliament," Mr. Gandhi said. That is why, he added, the BJP had first tried to "distract" by raising his alleged "anti-India" narrative in London, and then came the "disqualification".

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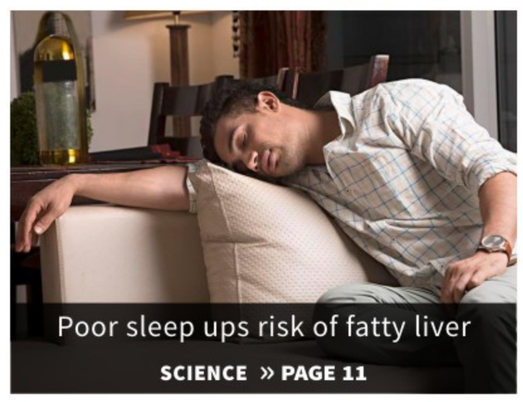

NEARBY

Namma Metro's Whitefield line inaugurated

BENGALURU
Ahead of the Karnataka Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the metro line to Whitefield. He took a round-trip on a train from Whitefield to Sathya Sai Hospital station. » Page 4

Cong. announces first list of candidates

BENGALURU
Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, former Union Minister K.H. Muniyappa, KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, former KPCC president G. Parameshwara, and veteran leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa are among those who have found their names in the first list of 124 candidates released by the Congress on Saturday for elections to the Legislative Assembly. » Page 5

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Guided flow: An elevated view of the Visvesvaraya canal, which originates at the KRS reservoir, and water entering the Hulikere tunnel.

Measure for measure: Water from the canal is distributed to various areas depending on the storage level in the reservoir.

Running swiftly: The area around the canal carrying water from the Cauvery is lush with vegetation. Farmers take water using pumps for sugar cane and paddy crops.

Visionary tunnel

A 102-year-old underground structure has stood the test of time in meeting the irrigation needs of the farmers of Mandya in Karnataka

K. Bhagya Prakash
bhagyaprakash.k@thehindu.co.in

The Visvesvaraya canal, which carries water from the Krishnaraja Sagara (KRS) dam in Karnataka, is famous, but the Hulikere tunnel – a particular section of this canal – is an engineering marvel that remains unfamiliar to many.

Construction of the 2.8-km-long tunnel, which helps in the irrigation of parts of Mandya district, was completed in 1931.

The tunnel, about 124 km from Bengaluru, is the brainchild of civil engineer and statesman M. Visvesvaraya. It was commissioned by the Maharaja of Mysore Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar and Diwan Mirza Ismail. The cost incurred at that time was ₹4,56,000.

Although the surveying equipment available then was rudimentary, the tunnel was built to perfection and has stood the test of time. Shivalingu, 45, whose grandmother Kalamma worked as a labourer during the construction of the tunnel, says, "*Ajji* (grandma) used to narrate how engineers worked hard to bore the Hulikere Gudda (hillock) with labourers from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab and even from Afghanistan. While the labourers from other States got more money, the locals worked for less than half of the pay because they were hoping that the Cauvery water would come to their doorsteps and it would lead to great prosperity."

Farmers take water using pumps or through small canals to irrigate their sugar cane and paddy crops. There is lush vegetation all around the tunnel, which is 20 feet high and 15 feet wide.

Visitors can traverse a few metres of the tunnel when authorities stop the release of water from the KRS reservoir.

Going underground: The entry point of the Hulikere tunnel.

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Transgender folk artiste Manjamma Jogati is poll icon

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Manjamma Jogati

For the first time in the State, the Election Commission (EC) has chosen a transgender person, Manjamma Jogati, as a poll icon to motivate the community to vote. Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka, told *The Hindu* that Ms. Jogati, a transgender folk dancer, former chairperson of Karnataka Janapada Academy and a Padma Shri awardee, has been chosen as one of the poll ambassadors.

Kambar, Dravid

Cricketer Rahul Dravid, Jnanapeeth awardee Chandrashekar Kambar, visually challenged person from Belaku Academy Ashwini Angadi and Paralympian Girish Gowda are the other poll icons in the State.

According to data, transgender voters have increased from 4,552 in 2018 to 42,756 in 2023. While 9.8% of 4,552 enrolled transgenders voted in the 2018 Assembly elections, 11.49% of the registered 4,839 transgenders voted in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. "This time, we want to ensure all enrolled members from this community vote," said P.S. Vastrad, State nodal officer, SVEEP.

Lack of documents

While the official said 41,312 have enrolled and attempts are on to get the remaining registered, community leaders have disputed the numbers. "Our population is over two lakh in the State but not all can enrol owing to lack of documents. Members are known by different names and most would have changed their identity. Technical issues like getting school certificates with their changed names is a challenge and this impacts enrolment. Officials demand address proof and medical certificates. Where will our members get these from," Ms. Jogati asked. "Besides, many are uneducated and there is no way they can prove their transgender status as there is no certification. There should be a simplified system in which authorities can certify their status. I have raised these points and conveyed it to the EC through the Women and Child Welfare Department," she said.

Fighting stigma

Akkai Padmashali, transgender activist and founder of Ondede, said, that no clear numbers are available on the transgender community because there has been no census. She said the actual number of transgenders in the State could be ten times higher than what is officially recorded.

"Societal discrimination is a major factor that keeps our members away on polling day. We face stigma when standing in a polling queue," she said.

Draft curriculum framework on early learning recommends play-based pedagogy

Framed in accordance with National Education Policy-2022, it will be implemented in 2023-24 after final notification of KSCF

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The draft Karnataka State Curriculum Framework (KSCF) for Foundational Level Education (Early Childhood Care and Education) for children in the age group of 3 to 8 years, in accordance with National Education Policy-2022, has recommended a play/activity-based pedagogy at this stage of schooling. The draft was released on Saturday.

Since play is the natural medium for children's learning in the early childhood years, the KSCF has recommended a play-based pedagogy as most appropriate for this stage of education.

For all schools

The recommendations apply to all categories of foundational stage schooling across public, private and voluntary sectors. The KSCF, modelled on National Curriculum Framework (NCF), proposes changes in the curriculum of existing practices of 'Chili pili' in Anganwadis and 'Nali Kali' in 1-3 grades of primary schools and will be implemented in the academic year 2023-24, after the final KSCF is notified after objections to the draft are collated and incorporated.

A file photo of children playing at a school in Bengaluru.

The Draft KSCF recommends four hours of schooling for 3 to 6 year old children and 5.5 hours for children of 6 to 8 years of age for 25 days a month. This includes a snack break, lunch time, outdoor activity, indoor activity, storytelling and reading. Draft KSCF has given more importance to mathematics, through activities for at least one hour per day.

'Complexity' of Kannada

Though the NEP and NCF have proposed the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, KSCF has highlighted the complexity of the Kannada script. "The Kannada script is far more complex than English or even Devanagari and takes longer to master. The State needs to decide the grade at which children will be expected to achieve the foundational skills in literacy in their mother tongue," Draft KSCF says.

KSCF also recommended a systematic process of school rationalization to merge schools with very poor student strength to create bigger schools. "This move will help the State to support monograde classes in the preparatory stage with optimum student teacher pupil ratios, make schools economically viable and ensure quality," the report says.

Woman who stole 42-day-old baby caught

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 58-year-old priest of a temple situated near Okhalipuram helped Kalasipalya police arrest, on Saturday (March 25) morning, a 25-year-old woman who had stolen a 42-day-old baby from Kalasipalya.

The accused, identified as Nandini alias Ayesha, wife of Asif and resident of Shivajinagar and native of Mulabagilu, had stolen the baby girl Aayath from her house in Durgamma street in Kalasipalya.

The couple, Farheen and Nadeem Sheikh, were sleeping with the baby, and the main door of the house was open. The accused entered the house, picked up the baby and a mobile phone, and escaped. The mother woke up a few minutes later and realized that the baby and the mobile phone were missing. She alerted her husband, who filed a police complaint.

The Kalasipalya police sounded an alert and began a search for the baby. The accused reached Gangamma Mariyamma temple in Okalipuram near railway quarters and was sitting outside the temple. The temple priest, Bhoopalan, on noticing her, enquired of her. She replied that she had lost her way and wanted to go to Mangaluru. Bhoopalan got her food and noticed that the baby was not moving for a long time. Suspecting something fishy, he got the phone number of her husband and spoke to him.

Nandini alias Ayesha who was arrested for stealing a baby girl.

The person, who was on the other side, told him that she had had a fight and left the house. Upon asking for the location, the accused gave a different address which led him to suspect that something was amiss.

He called his friends Balu Subramanium, Vishnu, Nagamma, and Hemanth. They came and questioned the woman and found that she was lying. While she started giving different versions, Bhoopalan called the police and narrated what had happened. A police team reached the spot, detained the accused, and rescued the baby. The child was then taken to a hospital and later handed over to the parents. Lakshman Nimbargi, DCP, West, visited the station and thanked Bhoopalan and his friends for helping the police crack the case.

The police have taken into custody the accused, a habitual mobile lifter, and are probing to ascertain if she is part of a child-kidnapping racket.

Three arrested for murder

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Madanayakanahalli police have three people who ran their SUV over a motorcycle killing the rider on the spot.

Investigations revealed that the accused Chandan Gowda, 26, Goutham Gowda, 22, and Rajesh, 24, wanted to kill Lokesh over a money dispute, but ran over his friend Chandrashekhar when their SUV rammed into his bike.

Bengaluru Habba

Folk artistes taking a breather during the Bengaluru Habba festival, at Cubbon Park on Saturday. PTI

Chief Minister inaugurates Cubbon Park toy train

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Children visiting Bal Bhavan in Cubbon Park can now take a ride in the 'Putani Train'. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday inaugurated the renovated Bal Bhavan and flagged off the Putani Train.

Bengaluru Smart City Limited had taken up restoration work of Bal Bhavan along with South Western Railway (SWR) to repair the track, which has remained unused for many years.

"The toy train used to be a primary attraction for children visiting the park. Considering the same, under the Smart City project, we have upgraded the facilities to run the train. Apart from this, an island which was built for boating and was in a bad shape has also been restored. We have introduced various activities for children including a science park," a senior official from Bengaluru Smart City Ltd. said.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Revenue Minister R. Ashok flagging off the toy train at the renovated Bal Bhavan in Bengaluru on Saturday.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Before it was shut down, 5,000 to 7,000 children used to visit the park during weekends while close to 2,000 on weekdays. The toy train has been the biggest attraction in Bal Bhavan. The track is 1.25 km long. The train covers this distance in around eight minutes. "Bal Bhavan, inside Cubbon Park, is spread over 12 acres. After the outbreak of the pandemic, it had remained shut. There will be more footfall since these facilities are open to children now," an official from the Horticulture Department hoped.

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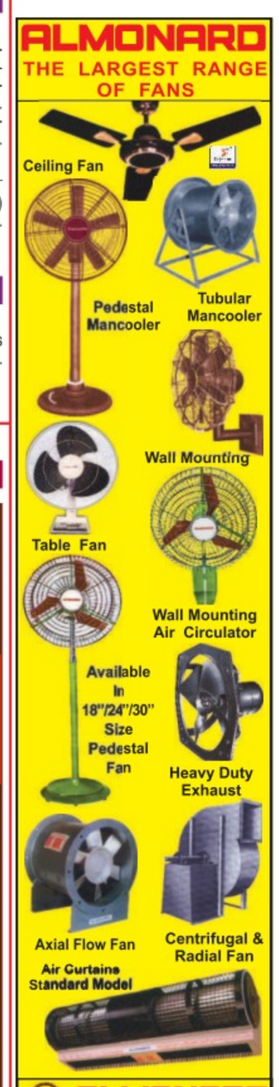

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I Kanthi Shetty D/o of Ramanna Shetty, do here by solemnly affirm and state on oath as that Iam the absolute owner of Flat No. 1, Ground Floor, 'Galaxy Mansion' No. 44, Original property document bearing PID No.7-35-44, 17th Cross, 11th Main Road, Malleshwaram, Bangalore measuring 903 Sq. Ft built up area, purchased vide sale Deed Reg No. YPR-1-01132-2011-12, Book No. 1, C.D.No. YPRD 33 date 24.08.2011, registered before SRO Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru. The Original tittle Deed in respect of the aforesaid Flat is misplaced / lost while shifting the House. I have also given a police complaint to near by Police Authorities on vide Lost Report No. P.O. No.0509378/22.03.2023. I further declare that the information furnished is true to the best of my knowledge and belief sworn before Advocate and Notary K.P.Ramesh on 21.03.2023, If found please contact Mobile No : 9945068393

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby Notified to general Public that our Client, **M/s. Sai Prakruthi Gardenia,** a Registered Partnership Firm, having its Registered offices at No. 59, 1st Floor, 1st Main, Nitte-Meenakshi College Road, Jayamuni Nagara, Vaderapura Village, Yelahanka, Bengaluru-560064, represented by its authorized Partners, **(i) Sri Kiran H.B. & (ii) Sri Rohit Kumar Tiwary** intend to purchase the Schedule property. Any person/s having any sort of right, claim or title over the Schedule property may notify with documentary proof, either to us or to our Clients within **FIFTEEN (15) DAYS** from the date of this Notice, failing which our Clients shall assume that there are no claims, whatsoever and there afterwards shall proceed to purchase the Schedule property.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of Agricultural Property bearing Sy. No. 71/1 (Old Sy. No. 71), measuring to an extent of 06 Acres 33 Guntas, situate at Sathanur Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk (earlier Bengaluru North Taluk), Bengaluru, bounded on: **East by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 71/2, **West by:** Govt. Halla and Land Bearing Sy. No. 70, **North by :** land bearing Sy. No. 72 & Sy. No. 82, **South by:** Land Bearing Sy. No. 68

M/s. MATHRU ASSOCIATES
No.3/15-B, 2nd Floor, DBS Gurusiddappa Building, 4th Main, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-560009. Ph: 9900900166

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our clients Sri Nemichand Jain S/o Late Megharaj Jain is negotiating to purchase of the immovable property bearing **Survey No.125,** measuring **02 (Two) Acre**, Situated at **Chikkajala Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bengaluru District,** which is more fully described in the Schedule hereunder, from its present owner **C.G.K. PRASAD S/o M.H. CHIKKANNAIAH** r/at No.12124, RPC Layout, Vijayanagara, Bengaluru-560 040.

It is claimed that Sri C.G.K. PRASAD S/o M.H. CHIKKANNA is the absolute owner of the Schedule Property and acquired the same by inheritance. He represent that there is no encumbrance of any nature, statutory or otherwise subsists in respect of Schedule Property.

This is to give notice to the public that any person/s who claims any right, title or interest of any nature in or any lien, charge or enforceable right in relation to Schedule Property and/or has any objections of any nature to the proposed transaction or is in possession or claims any right there under should lodge such claim and/or objections, in writing, with the undersigned together with supporting documents within **Ten Days** from the date of publication, failing which it will be presumed that no valid claims or objections subsist and our client would proceed to complete the transaction, subject to clear title and compliance with other statutory formalities.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing **Survey No.125,** measuring **02(Two) Acre**, Situated at **Chikkajala Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bengaluru District** and bounded on:

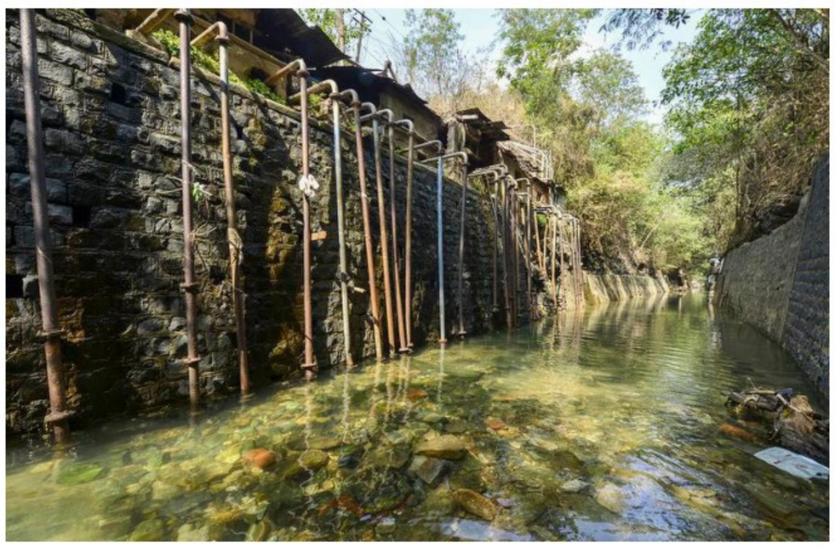
East by : Property in Survey No.65 belongs to H.S.Muniyappa, West by : Property in Survey No.76, North by : Property in Survey No.65 & 76, South by : Property in Sy.No.124 & 120 belongs to KLE Society.

From : D. Venkatesh, Advocate
No.441, 2nd Cross, 3rd Block, 3rd Stage, Basaveshwaranagara, Bangaluru.
Cell:994520808, mail: venkteshd@gmail.com

Labyrinthine passage: A view of the interior of the 102-year-old Hulikere tunnel during the dry season.

Checking in: An entry point along the tunnel comes in handy for repairs.

Finding its way: The exit point of Hulikere tunnel where water goes out towards Mandya.



Precious supply: Water is pumped up through pipelines for irrigation in Mandya.

Green patch: Farmers engaged in ploughing and transplanting of seedlings at Shivalli in Mandya district.

SUNDAY
March 26, 2023

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
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THE HINDU ON SUNDAY

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GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
NAVA KARNATAKA FOR NAVA BHARAT

Tribute to the Great Souls of Karnataka,

Shri Jagajyothi Basaveshwara
and
Nadaprabhu Shri Kempegowda

26th March 2023 | Sunday

Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Unveiling of the Statues of Shri Jagajyothi Basaveshwara and Nadaprabhu Kempegowda by

Shri Amit Shah

Hon'ble Union Minister for Home and Cooperation

Shri Basavaraj S. Bommai
Hon'ble Chief Minister

6.30 PM
Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

Unveiling of the Statues and Closing Ceremony of Namma Bengaluru Habba 2023

Divine Presence

HH Jagadguru Shri Shri Shri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji
Suttur Math, Mysuru

HH Shri Shri Vishwaprasanna Theertha Swamiji
Jagadguru Madhwacharya Moola Samsthana, Shri Pejawara Math, Udupi

HH Jagadguru Dr. Shri Shri Shri Nanjavadhutha Mahaswamiji
Shri Gurugunda Brahmeshwaraswamy Math, Shri Sphatikapuri Maha Samsthana, Shrikshetra Pattanayakanahalli, Sira Taluk

HH Shri Basavamurthy Madara Chennaiah Mahaswamiji
Shri Shivasharana Madara Chennaiah Gurupeetha, Chitradurga

HH Jagadguru Shri Shri Shri Dr. Nirmalanandanatha Mahaswamiji
Pontiff, Shri Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Math, Nagamangala Taluk, Mandya

HH Shri Shri Siddalinga Mahaswamiji
President, Shri Siddaganga Math, Tumakuru

HH Shri Shri Shri Vachanananda Mahaswamiji
Veerashaiva Lingayata Panchamasali Jagadguru Peetha, Harihara

HH Shri Shri Kumara Chandrashekhara Swamiji
Pontiff, Vishwa Vokkaligara Mahasamsthana Math, Kengeri, Bengaluru

All are cordially invited

R. Ashoka
President, Shri Jagajyothi Basaveshwarara and Shri Kempegowdara Statue Installation Management Committee and Bengaluru Habba Management Committee

As enshrined in our Constitution, - to safeguard public property and to abjure violence is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India.

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Department of Information and Public Relations

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Classifieds

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

DOCTOR

SUNNI, MUSLIM boy, completed MD/MS (clinical), 31 to 34 yrs, from TN belonging to a good family background to be a suitable match for our daughter, who's 30yrs, M.S. Ophthal, currently working. Contact : 9840895036

VANNIYAR DOCTOR girl, MD – Radiology. 30 yrs/170cm fair and rich. currently working in vellore. please send horoscope with profile to watsapp 9080900741

DOCTOR GIRL MD Anesthesiology 33/165 fair pretty cultured & well mannered Chennai based doctors family. Father Doctor Kerala Nair, Mother Tamil CSI. Doctor grooms MD MS MCh DM & Engineers from good family background prfd. 9840050381/ 9840985383

Hindu, Doctor Bride, 24 Yrs, 167cm, Sozhia Vellala, Punarpoosam, affluent family, finished PLAB, doing clinical attachment in UK, seeks Tall, tamil speaking, Doctor Groom, Studying / Working in UK, from similar background. Contact: 9443625539

HINDU, TAMIL, 24/164, MBBS, Doctor in United Kingdom. Parents working professionals. Seeking Medical Doctor (25–29). T: 0044–7885978503.

DKV 27 / 155, Aswini, MBBS. Seeks Doctor Groom Only. Contact : 94429 24441 / 94431 51045

HINDU, DOCTOR MS, Reddy 32Yrs/165cm Fair, Affluent and Currently Settled in Chennai. Seeks Groom from Similar Background. Any Profession / Business Contact: 89256 40111

WE ARE looking for an alliance for our daughter, aged 29 years, residing in UK, PG in Medicine. The groom should hail from a decent, educated (Doctor) family. Contact with (Astrological) details Mobile. 9632737562 or Email to mpsmannoor@rediffmail.com

26 YEARS /165cm Doctor , Joining Neurology residency in June 23 at New Jersey USA. Seeks Medical Doctor Groom from BC doing Residency/ Fellowship in USA. WhatsApp 9677026459

DOCTOR PARENTS invite Post Gradute Doctor Grooms for their Beautiful, Fair girl M.S(O.G) working in Govt. Hospital at Chennai, belongs to Pillai Community born on 1992. Contact: 98431 44420

HINDU NADAR Doctor girl M.S. Punardham, 27/168 cm, seeks alliance from doctors only.
Contact : 08281795158,
email: aswinganesh14@gmail.com

ENGINEER

HINDU PQM for Mum. Bengali girl 36y/5ft 3inch fair BE MBA w'kg MNC Pune. 8879050666, gcroy1948@gmail.com

KANNADA

HINDU VOKKALIGA 28, BE, DIP(Arch) from Coimbatore seeks Groom from the same community. CT: 97917 68175.

KANNADA DEVANGAR parents seek groom for divorcee girl 35 yrs TN Govt. Service. Other Suitable caste considered. Ph: 7356896214, 9446591614

MALAYALAM

GROOM WANTED: Vishwakarma TGS Girl, 26 Ayilyam, 165cm.M.Com, CA (inter) –ICAI,Affluent family,Trivandrum.Contact:9388705000/9446577909

RE–MARRIAGENAIR GIRL (widow – issueless), 39 / 158, Uthradam, B.Tech, MNC Bangalore.Preferably from boys employed in/transferrable to Bangalore.9880273614 / 9633851831

KERALA SC girl 26/150, beautiful, wheatish, B.Tech from NIT and doing MS at USA seeks grooms with good educational qualification in the age group of 27-31. Caste and language no bar. Prefer alliances from USA. Contact 9588463579

HINDU – SC Girl: 37/157, Agri -Scientist - (CG-Pune) from south Kerala, seeks alliance from well educated professionals. Contact: 7972420241, 9447296008

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

TAMIL

CSI CHRISTIAN Girl 32 BE working in MNC, seeks BE/ME Bride Groom with Good Job. Contact: 90430 19165

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl Fair, Good Looking, 03–04–1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc M.Phil, working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Women's College, Mount Road, Chennai. Both Parents Doctors (Private), Suitable Alliance, Employed / Settled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Contact: 9841182514

CHRISTIAN RC Pillai. Age 35, TL in Reputed MNC. Looking for equivalent Caste / Anglo. Ph: 9944170209

TAMIL CATHOLIC affluent Doctor parents are looking for a suitable groom working in India or Abroad for their fair, beautiful daughter 29/160, who is an accomplished Doctor, Ct: 9945530186

CSI NADAR Girl, MS Structural Engineering, 26/162cm, fair seeks bridegroom who is God fearing, well educated & settled, tall from an educated family. 94447 08541 / 98406 96274

AFFLUENT RC Christian family seeks Professionaly Qualified well settled Groom from respectable family for 32yrs Bride, MCA,Divorcee(issueless). 9443569083/ selvarajcecri@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM Divorcee with 8 years boy, MD Dr., age 33, 163cm good looking bride seeking alliance Dr., Er., Professional Degree or business man only in chennai or abroad. Ct: H.Adambasha 98403 97405

HINDU DKV 36/162 B.Tech IT TCS Chennai 16 Lac p.a SWE seeks Bank, Central, State Govt. Employee. CT: 95668-84715, 94424-44715.

MUDALIAR /PILLAI 35/154 fair Hastham MCA Uppr Mid Cls Chennai Seeks Prof Quaf Workg in Corp Co 8220757159

PILLAI/ MUDALIAR B.E/ Kettai / MNC 25 Reputed Business family seeks alliance Ph : 98400 93322

TAMIL Agamudaiyar Devar fair 34yrs Divorced Govt.Doctor doing MS (Opthalmology), seeking good manner and decent Groom preferably PG Doctor Govt/ Pvt in Coimbatore, Karur, Tanjore and Chennai age between 36 to 40 years. CT:7010106249.

HINDU, SC Adi dravida, BE MBA, Female, Age 29, working in Accenture. Please Contact to:– (M) 9444991091.

RICH HINDU Nadar, 32 / MS., Famous Industrialist Daughter Seeks Rich Groom. Ct: 95141 73518

ELITE MUDALIYAR 23 / B.Tech, (Textiles Mills Owner) Rich Family Seeks Groom. Ct: 72000 67015

MUDALIAR THULUVA vellalar,U. Krithika B.Com,MBA,CA–working,Own house –5,Dob:28/10/98,6.17pm,Thiruvonam 1 Paadham,Magaram.7010973661,Ch–96.

SINGAPOREAN, SAIVA Pillai, CNB, Veg, Dentist, 25/158. Seeking a well–educated groom working in Singapore or willing to relocate. Contact WhatsApp : +65 91670073

MANNADIAR Girl 32/156 PhD Chemistry, Avitom, Asst.Professor, Gujarat, Vegetarian. 8281641881, 9429815230

SC AD Hindu unmarried Msc 37 Seeking Groom 8610410886.Caste No Bar. Brokers Excuse.

VANNIYAR TAMIL unmarried 57 years PG well settled seeks suitable groom between 60–70 years Ct: 6383024827

WANTED VEG, non–smoker, Non – alcoholic Brahmin boy, Japanese knowing, based or inclined to locate to Japan for 28 year old girl, Srivatsa gotram, graduate, proficient in Japanese language and working in Tokyo Japan. WhatsApp to 9845319783 or email: swarna_mohan@Hotmail.com

KONGU VELLALA Girl 26 doing CA (Final), Seeks CA pursuing completed Groom. CT:9363243711

HINDU NADAR 23,BE 165cm (Studied CBSE) Fair Seekes Educated Well Settled Family Ct: 9840366663 Chennai

HINDU MUDALIYAR Age 26, MBBS 165cm Rs.40000 PM Caste No Bar Ct: 8939691888 / 9710093999

HINDU NADAR Age 25, BE, 160cm Rs.90000 PM KA Raman Nadar Contact: 9380791999

SUITABLE MATCH for girl, B.E., MBA, Deputy Manager State Bank of India, Mumbai, Age 27, Devendra Kula Vellalar, Star: Sitthirai, Rasi: Kanni, Native: Tirunelveli, Mobile: 9566897347, 6379758442

HINDU ADIDRAVIDAR Kongu Parayar 32 BE, M.Tech, PhD Seeks educated Profl groom. CT:8760883559 / 8637663072

HINDU NADAR girl, MOB 8/1994, ME, Ht 168 cms, 65 kg, Wheatish brown, Thiruvathirai, Mithunam with Chevvai Ragu Kaethu, Upper middle class Seeks equally qualified boy, well settled. Ct: 96265 15511

SUITABLE MATCH for Fair looking, IT Professional, Yadava Girl– B.E./ MBA– Yadava/ Intercaste– Age:30–31yrs– Vegetarian preferred. 9884789389

HINDU 25/160/MS, CS, USA, working for a reputed IT MNC in USA seeks suitable groom, preferably working in USA. Caste No bar. Ct: 9902806056

HINDU NADAR Divorced 32yr 1990 M.E IT. 70000 per month. Divorced Groom from same Caste & Good Family & Background. Only from Tamil Nadu / working in Bangalore also. 9445614753

HINDU 28, M.Com., PGDCA, Divorcee,working in MNC, Chennai, Caste no bar, seeks suitable Groom. Ct: 97866 16191, 94870 74569.

HINDU SC AD 36yrs 161cm BE MBA, Manager(HR) in Coal India Ltd @Nagpur, Well settled,caste No Bar, Seeks Qualify Groom, 8680095094/ 8248498021

HINDU NADAR, Chennai, 29, M.Tech, Govt Officer, Good Salary. Seeking PG, Well Settled, Educated Family in Chennai, 9445055308

DOCTOR, Mudaliar, MS, 27/168,Fair& Slim Educated&Cultured,Upper Middle class family,Coimbatore seeks groom MD/MS/DNB/MCh/DM.Ct:9994498762

MUDALIAR (CNB) : 24/V.Fair & Beautiful, B.E, Textile Manufacturing & Export Business, Affluent Family, Seeks Groom Business / Abroad / India – 8939012419

MBBS 36 fair 5ft 1st marriage MBC well settled want BC, MBC any professional NO HOROSCOPE 9385665734

MUDALIAR 25/168, Vishaka, Tula Rasi, M.Sc (Bio-Chemistry), Mysore based affluent family looking for their only daughter, from well settled & good family background, b/w 26 - 29 yrs groom, Govt/ PSU preferred. Ct: 9449003898/ 9480194897

MUDALIYAR SUPER Splty Dr. (M.Ch) 29/155 seeks groom with PG Super Splty Dr. with MCh/DM/MS/MD. Ct: 9500085455/ 9341274028

VANNIYAKULA KSHATRIYA, fair girl, 25yrs/168cm Uthiram– 1 patham, B.E ,M.S(Engg) Australia. Father S.E, (Retd) TNEB. Seek Smart handsome Groom M.S(Engg). Ct: 9789461060

VANIYA CHETTIYAR Aswini Mesam 28/163 MBBS, MD final year,Pulmonology,seeks Doctor/IPS/IAS. Sub cast no bar.Ct: sendhu94@gmail.com 9840125521

GROOM WANTED
Fair, Smart, Pretty Girl Software Analyst in MNC. 14 L Per Annum, BE-ECE, 29 / 5.6'. Intercaste Hindu Parents (Naidu & Vishwakarma) Seeks Software Professional Hindu Groom
Ct: 94444 02824

TAMIL

GROOM WANTED
Vellore based Lady Doctor, 30 years, Fair, MBBS, PG Dip HM, employed as Resident Doctor in a reputed hospital in Vellore. Father is an Engineer, Family is affluent. Looking for compatible match from Hindu, Christian RC, Fair, Handsome, Vellalar, Pillai, Mudaliyar, Chettiyar, CNB. Preferably IAS, IFS or Highly qualified professionals.
Contact Whatsapp 9952370373
effwillarr@protonmail.com

TAMIL

WORKING PROFESSIONAL, Tuluva Vellal Mudaliar Good looking Girl 35 Uthirattathy, Meenam, Family Seeks Alliance from First and Unmarried Bachelor Bridegroom Aged 35–37 Yrs, Employed, Caste no bar. Contact: After 7 PM; 7550245659

MUSLIM BRIDEGROOM WANTED
MUSLIM innocent Divorcee, No child, PG Dr. Bride, Fair Age 31, 160cm, practicing in Australia seeking alliance Dr., Er., any professional Degree willing to settled in Australia.
Contact: H.Adambasha
98403 97405

Hindu Adidravida Hastham 27/154cm B.E MNC, 16L PA seeks suitable Alliance from Govt, PSU, IT. Ct: 9444155781

SC AD 42 years DGO, Husband died in COVID-19, seek remarriage from Doctor Groom Below 45, Contact : 9445529855

BRIDES WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

39 YEARS unmarried Hindu groom with 5'7" height and fair complexed, self employed civil engineer post graduate, with own residence in hyderabad, and earning of 25–30 Lakhs/ Annum looking for educated bride from a reputed family background. Contact No – 9985637279

DIVORCEE

TAMILNADU–BASED ISSUELESS NRI groom, second divorcee born in 1964. Seeking issueless bride, who should be focused and escalate, loyal to stay Long. Ct. 63857 54610

BENGALURU BASED, Software Professional, 6 ft / 1971 born – fair, Tamil, Hindu, Yadava – Male (divorced) seeks proposals from suitable, educated Hindu women (preferably) from Bengaluru. Caste no bar. Please email shankris2022@gmail.com / call +91 90085 42820 with details.

HINDU/ SC/ AD, (Tamil), BE ME, Chief Manager, PSU Bank, 34 Tall and good looking seeks alliance for remarriage from unmarried or divorced bride. Ph: 98400 96246 / 98408 66982

MALAYALAM

MALAYALEE BRIDE WANTED
Reputed Nair family of Engineers settled in Trivandrum; looking for professionally qualified good - looking Nair bride preferably employed/studying or planning studies/job in USA.
Nair boy, 31/174 cm, Pooradam, Mechanical Engineer (B.Tech (IITB), MS, PhD (MIT,USA) is working on GC in Houston. Parents of accomplished girls may forward horoscope or to;
Whatsapp; 9446522145
Gmail; suranjithaptp@gmail.com

MALAYALI EZHAVA Boy, 34 years/ 165 Cms, MDS, Settled in Tamil Nadu. Looking for MBBS / BDS Ezhava girl. Contact: 95002 34204 / 72004 72221.

EliteMatrimony.com
Exclusive matchmaking service for the elite from Matrimony.com Group

ELITE BRIDES WANTED

BRAHMIN, 28, 175 cms, Executive, B.Tech. Lives in Chennai. Father is a retired person. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a like minde match. Contact: 6366448344

VEERA SAIVAM, 36, 175 cms, Businessman, MBA. Lives in Chennai. Belongs to an affluent business family with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible match. Contact: 6366448343

MUDALIYAR, 26, 157 cms, Executive, Masters. Lives in Orissa. Father is a Working Professional. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366448343

CHETTIAR, 31, 183 cms, Businessman, MS. Lives in Chennai. Mother is a Working Professional. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448343

VANNIA KULA KSHATRIYAR, 25, 165 cms, Correspondent of School, Masters. Lives in Arakkonam. Father is a Correspondent of School. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a suitable match. Contact: 6366448343

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

BRAHMIN, 23, 157 cms, Product Analyst, BBA. Lives in USA. Father is a retired person. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for an affable match. Contact: 6366448344

KONGU CHETTIAR, 28, 170 cms, Entrepreneur, Bachelors. Lives in Tiruppur. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for an affable match. Contact: 6366448343

NADAR, 23, 165 cms, BDS. Lives in Ramanathapuram. Parents are Working Professional. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a suitable match. Contact:6366448343

CHRISTAIN, 34, 157 cms, Film Director, Masters. Lives in Chennai. Father is a working professional. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448343

LINGAYATH, 27, 173 cms, Post graduate, from a Bangalore based high profile family with very good net worth. Looking for an amiable match from the same community in Bangalore. Contact: 6366448346

Call for Free Consultation ✆ 63 66 44 83 47

TAMIL

Hindu AD/SC, 25/165, Graduate, Fair, Good looking,Classical Dancer Sathya Sai Baba Devotee,Teacher-Pvt School, seeks suitable Groom Fr good family background, pref. Sri Sathya Sai Baba Devotee.Ct:9445116994 / 9445024377

IYER, Affluent, 32yrs /5 Ft, Kousigam, Bharani. Lawyer, PG Chennai, 55L P.A only child, brilliant, Robust Built, Multiple Properties seeks well Educated, Employed or Business,Cultured, Clean Habits, Affulent Groom from Chennai Brahmins Pfrd. Ct: 99400 82545

Tamil Brahmin Girl, 35yrs/162cm B.E, M.B.A currently employed in London, Married but Nullified. Alliance invited from a well Qualified & Employed Groom upto 40 yrs, maritial status any with modern outlook. Ct: 93828 56277.

AD 27/160 BHMS Dr.wrking seeks Groom blw 32yrs well settled Edu Hindu fmly Dr/Er/any Govt officr 9444220872

TELUGU

GAVARA NAIDU 29/165 B.E(EEE) MBA.Seeks educated groom with good Job,Salary.9600626739 / 8344969541

BORN AUGUST 1990 165cm Ph.D Scholar smart medium complexion from a Reputed family seeks well educated and settled groom in India born not earlier than 1987. Call : 9790908109

NAIDU 27/162, Beautiful, MBBS,MS–OG Doing,Industrialist Daughter Elite family, CNB. 7299576644, 7299576666

GROOM WANTED
Naidu, 28yrs / 5'4"/ Hastham, M.B.B.S (Doing P.G), Chennai from Educated, Cultured and Affluent Family Seeking Groom (Age 29 to 33 yrs) (Tee-Totaler) From Well Educated, Cultured and Decent Family.
Ct:98848 76246

PQM of Same Caste From UM Class for 30y 5'3" fair Balija / Kapu MBA 13L Salaried Girl Contact: 9177680528

ENGLISH

MUDALIAR, 35, 1st marriage, MSc (Media), salary 3.6 lakh P/A + rental income from property, Punarpoosam, Educated family, seeks educated, employed brides 27 to 32 age contact 9840276814 (W)

HINDI

1985/175CM. IT. 40 Lakhs PA. Chennai. Father Doctor. Seeks well educated bride. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

MALAYALAM

NAIR 28/192 Smart Software Professional MNC Chennai CHOTHI seeks tall good looking well educated brides from respectable NAIR families. 9444414951/8838593652

NAIR BOY 39 from Coimbatore, Chathayam, working in HCL Technologies, Chennai (WFH) looking for suitable alliance. Brokers please excuse. Please contact: 9894546059/ 9894748077

URDU

MUSLIM SYED 23/165, M.Com Good looking girl. Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact : 94429 10133

SUNNI MUSLIM parents seek Allopathic Doctor or Non IT Engineer (Oil/ Gas / Petrochem/MNC Tamilnadu or Abroad) for daughter 30 Yrs Slim, Fair, Smart MBBS.M.S., Mobile:8056198771

SMU GIRL 25 / 165 well–to–do family, B.Design,Fair,Slim working seeks well Educated Groom working in US/ UK/ Canada/ Australia Ct.9841106166

SMU PARENTS Coimbatore based invite alliance for their daughter 24/164, BE working in MNC at Chennai. Ct: 9842276622

✔ Urdu Muslim Bride 24 Beautiful, B.D.S, Father Doctor Rich, Seeks Groom Doctor / doing Business. Contact: 98427 18757

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

LOOKING FOR a simple, caring and understanding girl from a decent Brahmin family for my son who is 34, independent and self–employed as DTP operator in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Slow learners and persons with any disability are also welcome. Contact: 9244649231

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN NADAR, 34yrs/178cms, MBBS with dip in Cardiology Private Doctor good looking lives in Nagercoil, Innocent Divorcee seeks same caste qualified Bride/ Divorcee above 28yrs. Ct: 90039 83230.

CHRISTIAN 41/170. B.E Software Engineer, Chennai, Never married, seeks bride from elite family, caste no–bar,CT– 9500188067

TAMIL ROMAN Catholic. Seeking a suitable bride for our son, 33 yrs, Fair, 172 cm tall, MS Aerospace, Head Of Operations, Germany. Caste No Bar. Contact: 9042607923

MUDALIYAR 30YRS MS/Thiruvonam, Magara Rasi working in US in IT Sector Well to Do Family with his Assests Worth in Crores.Seeks Bride 9840456644(only Whats App call) 9840636662

HINDU, BALIJA Age 46/166, B.sc Business / 25k Seeks Suitable Bride below 37. Caste No bar. Ct: 9444107875

ALLIANCE INVITED from a well–settled Hindu family for our SON 36/175cms,Good Looking, B.E.,M.S (UK) , Successfully running own business in Trichy & Coimbatore from affluent family (Caste no bar, Prefer Pet Lovers). Contact: 8148796783

KONGU VELLALA Gounder 49yrs Divorcee 12-15 LPA, no expectations, Seeks Educated Bride. Ct:9865679006

MUDALIAR/NAIDU 27/173 Msc Fin Doha Seeks Educated Bride from a rich family. CNB Geetham 9884858014

TAMIL

COIMBATORE HINDU Valluvan 26 Sathayam JSW Cements Salem Plant Engineer Parents Govt Staff Only Son Clean habits Need Nivarthiyana Sevvai thosham bride 9442294411 (Night 7-9) Brokers pls excuse

CASTE NO BAR 38/168 PILLAI M.Tech SWE MNC Chennai 18L Aswini seeks bride 9841151575 write2vpt@gmail.com

CASTE NO Bar Hindu Sourashtra, BC 37 MBA Pvt Manager 1.15L Pm, Chennai. Suitable Bride Wanted 9381725577

CASTE NO BAR 1980 Bank Manager, Star: Bharani/Mesham Chennai–59. Seeks Bride. Cont – 9566209636/ 22394878

MUDALIAR, 19–10–1989/6'2", Thiruvadirai,Mithunam, BE, MBA, IT sector,11 LPA, Che, Sub caste: No bar, seeks a good looking, grad, employed girl btw 27–30 yr from a good family, 8056119148.

HINDU Parayar 33 BE Senior Piping Engineer, 12Lak PA, require Educated Girl from decent family. ct:9600577589

PROFESSOR, GOVT.COLLEGE, 43yrs/ 167cm, Sportsman seeks Professor/ Govt job/ Well Settled Bride Any caste & religion. Ct: 8870417228

GAVARA NAIDU, 39/180, Uthiradam, Maharam, B.E.,M.S(Eng) Maintenance Eng, MNC chennai, 15L PA, first marriage seeks Bride, Ct: 9487272897

HINDU SC Govt Doctor MBBS 43Yrs 1st Marriage Seeks Bride Doctor, Suitable Govt Official CNB 9382379832

MUDALIAR 29/175 MD Pediatrician having own Hospital seeks bride MD/MS Doctor only. Ct: 8870616802/ 8310519896

VANNIAR 31/178, Rich Fair Divorcee, Job @ Swiss Infosys 8Lac per month,Seeks Bride Expectation Never married, CNB Ct: 9443034808/ 9597405082

MD DOCTOR 39/180, Reddiyar. Mutual divorcee. Caste no bar. Ph 8124570336

IIM MBA Agamudayar, Mukkulathor, 97born/180cm,16L pa,Punarpoosam 2 seeks same caste Bride. 9842103232

SM4 BE/ MS IITM Boy 31/5'5" PhD Wkg in Australia 75 LPA. Star Jyeshta'3, Hindu-Mudaliyar/ BC/MBC caste no bar. Ct: 9486088958/ 9384080919

BTECH, BITSPILANI 6'1 Mudaliar born in Nov 91 Wkg at Bengalore Product Manager Sal 40 lacs seeks Bride 5'4 Btech,CA Doctor. - Ct: 7382620365

HINDU YADAVA, Handsome, clean habits 26 /179 B.Tech working in MNC, 30 LPA, very short lived first marriage only 6 months. Father PSU officer. CNB. 7904627469

TAMIL HINDU BOY (BC). MBA. Age – 39. 1st Marriage. Very Honest & Faithful boy. Good beauty I can assure you that I have no bad habits. Full consent to be a GOOD HOUSE GROOM and a GOOD SON in a GIRL HOUSE. I will take care of my future wife like my mother. 2nd marriage is Accepted. (Caste & Religion no bar). Please Avoid brokers. Call: 91235 – 89257

60, SIMPLE, Healthy, Pretty, Decent. Seeking Good Looking Issueless Bride Caste No Bar. Ct: 7604841705

REDDIYAR (CNB) 31, Moolam, MBA Deloitte, rich – looking from Educated & Respectable Family.Ct. 9840405153

HINDU NADAR (Caste No Bar), 38/185, M.Tech (IIT Madras), Principal Engineer (Chip Design) in an MNC in Bangalore, eggetarian, seeks educated, never married, suitable bride (30–35 yrs). Veg/ eggetarians preferred. Ct: 9840117920.

GROOM 34,BE, Good Family & Settled, Working in USA.Seeking Hindu Bride. Caste,Region & Age No Bar. Divorcee Bride also with/without child. email: vedha.880827@gmail.com; C9042021137

VISWAKARMA GROOM,SW Eng Revathi/ ME(Ph.d)31/167 /Fair/RS.6 L PA. Seeks Suitable Bride 9444247481, 8428432112

MUDALIAR, 29, BE, MBA, 176 cm, 28 Lacs P.A, Well Settled Family Seeks Bride CNB Ct. 8778514465/ 7200866346

AGE 46, DME, Hindu Yadhavar, Business, First Marriage, Looking for Degree Completed Bride. Ct: 9952065594

PVT COLLEGE Professor 53/Divorcee Vellalar Seeks Widows Age45–50, Teachers or Unemployee, True Life Partner or Life Companion Ct:8148779326

✔ PILLAI(KARUNEEGAR), DOB:24–01–92, BE, Veg, Job: MNC (Software) Chennai, Annual Income: 23.5 lakhs. Seeking a suitable bride from the same or any other community. Ph: 9841784047 Email: pingme.arul@gmail.com.

TAMIL

TAMIL VANNIYASKULA Kshatriya 35/180 M.S (UK) Engineering design seeking bride same community contact No. 9486291986 / 9442910057

61 YRS, without income seeks settled widow, physically challenged as life companion from TN/ Kerala/Karnataka only. Age & Caste No Bar. Whatsapp: 98651 90772 (Madurai)

WE ARE looking for a bride for our only son (Engineer, 27 yrs, 5ft 11inch, Hindu, MD of a startup & based in Chennai) from well educated and good looking girl from well to do families. Contact: satishann67@gmail.com.

VISHWAKARMA 40, Divorced, Slightly disabled (Foot drop) DCE Manager P Ltd, 40k. caste no bar. Seeking understanding life partner. 8015624255

SOFTWARE ENGINEER Fair 5.9 / 29, Seeking Bride Good Looking from an Orthodox, Educated Family. 9840403377

HINDU 31 Years 185 cm. Currently working in Germany as a Senior Logistics Program Manager after doing MS in US. Well Settled Family. Star Hastham and BC. Seeks well Educated, Bride (Caste No Bar) from abroad or willing to move abroad for their only Son. 9840041041

MUDALIAR / Agamudayar / Thuluva Vellalar bride wanted for 29 yrs, US educated (both under and Post Grad) 1,50,000 USD, SWE in the top Corporate Employed Boy from affluent family in Chennai – 8925019776

BRAHMIN GOOD Looking Groom 39 Chennai Divorced &Well Settled Income Monthly 5 Lak Bride Wanted 8754536193

VANNIYAR 36/180, BSC, MSC, Phd., Pursuing, Professor/ Digital Marketing Specialist. 9L /PA. Revathy CNB in MBC Educated Girl Ct; 9840044473

ALLIANCE INVITED for Adi–dravida groom BE 32 PSU from Chennai based repectable family. Ct: 8825426736

WE ARE looking for an alliance for our son aged 31, employed in USA, 5ft 7inch, BE(EEE), MS (New York University), Hindu, Tamil brahmin brahacharanam. The bride should hail from a decent, educated family. (Same caste). (26 to 30) years. Contact with (Astrological) details +919176039263 or Email engaswamyganesan@gmail.com

IYER BRAHACHARANAM Moolam Netrakashyapam Nov 1973 Dipl. Pvt Org 5 L PA Seeks Any Girl 9840023524

IYER, 41 Years, Self Employed Chartered Accountant in Erode. Having own house and earns 25LPA. Right leg slightly short. He can walk and drive vehicle normally. Need Suitable Bride. Call 9994934568

IYER BRAHCHARANAM / Koundinyam / Avitam 1988 B.Com / MBA working pvt firm getting 4.5 LPA. Seeks working bride. 94431 32445.

IYENGAR VADAKALAI 34/167 Pooratathi Naithruba Kashyabam. MS BITS PILANI, MNC 2.5L Pm, Own House Coimbatore. Seeks Graduate Girl, Kalai & Subsects no bar. CT: 97890 14553, 80567 88367.

WANTED ANY Brahmin Girl for Boy M.K Srinivasakumar Age 44, 2nd Marriage No Kids, Own House Ambattur, Chennai. Subsect/ Language No Bar. Cell: 9710925815 or 9884995250

IYER KETTAI 39 BE LLB, 18L/pa own house, company all veg ok. divorcee excuse CNB. 9500456893/ 6369157055

VADAKALAI Iyengar Boy, Punarpoosam 5'ft 6 Inch, Bharatwaja Gothram, 1979, never married, MNC, Chennai, M.S. I.T, 24 Lacs pa seeks never married Brahmin Brides. Cont with BPH Whats App 7299704899 / 9443092289

SEEKING SIMPLE, Clean Habits,Vegetarian Bride willing to be Homemaker for our Son Ms(CS) USA,28yrs/ 178cms,Iyer,Vegetarian & Clean Habits.Financial Status of the Bride does not matter.Ct. WhatsApp:+1 732 372–8410

IYER VADAMA Naidhruva Kashyapa 43 Divorcee Progressive Outlook S/W Engg MNC Bangalore seeks suitable alliance from like–minded Brahmin Girls (Unmarried). Mobile:9952892314 / Email:vivaha.lagnam.2023@gmail.com

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TAMIL

HINDU SC Govt. Doctor, 47yrs, Unmarried Seeks Bride Equal Qualification Ct: 86680 90209 / 98403 74285.

31 / 164cm ME. Assistant Professor Chennai Divorcee seeks suitable Bride Unmarried/ Divorcee- No Issue. Naidu/ Mudaliar/ Pillai/ Chettiar Preferred. Contact: 94430 52596 / 94456 89306

SAIVA PILLAI, MSC MBA 4Lakhs/ monthly, Company Owner 15 Crores property, only son 173cm Visagam, 46yr unmarried cnb. 98415 53677 (W)

HINDU/ SC/ AD, (Tamil), BE ME, Chief Manager, PSU Bank, 34 Tall and good looking seeks alliance for remarriage from unmarried or divorced bride. Ph: 98400 96246 / 98408 66982

TELUGU

TELAGA KAPA, 43/173 . First Marriage Well settled B.Tech, AMIE, / 1 lakh p.m working in Visakhapatnam seeks good looking educated girl. Send photo & details. Whatsup 9789904155

VIP NAIDU, 27 / B.E.,M.S, Own Famous Engg Colleges & Steel TMT Rod Mfg Factory Seeks Bride. 7200259760

BALIJA NAIDU, 28/182 Poosam, Engr, Web Designer, 50K seeks educated bride Subcaste no bar. CT:96003 85286

KAMMAVAR NAIDU 30, 174 cm Pooram–Simmam M.S (Engg) working in USA seeks bride from same community working/studying in USA, CT. 9442026567 or kvr1956@gmail.com

BALIJA NAIDU 34yrs 175cm BE MBA. Architect and Interior designer 18L PA. Well settled family in chennai Divorced with in two months Caste no Bar 9884065632 / 9176667276.

HINDU PROPERTIED parents seeks bride for their mild intellectual disorder son 27/ 183 fair handsome studied in a reputed special school & graduated from SRM University. Working in a 5 Star hotel. Caste No bar. Ph: 7305533663/ sjdn1095@gmail.com

BRAHMIN GOUTHAMA Rohini, 26 yrs, 168 cms, B. Tech (Genetic engineering), M.Sc. Genomic Medicine (London, UK), Settled in Chennai, Affluent business family. Seeks Brahmin girl, professional, aged below 25 yrs. WhatsApp Parent: 93422 68247

NAIDU 30/170 Handsome,MBBS, MD,Dr in MMM Hospital, 1500000. PA,Affluent Family, CNB, 7299576644,7299576666

NAIDU 27 years,182cm, Magam MD Studying in USA seek Bride from Decent family willing to study / work in USA. Contact: 96771 22110

TELUGU BRAHMIN boy (35) fair, 5'6" Govt.Bank, B'lore, seeks alliance from Brahmin,veg Girls. 9003070946.

BRIDE WANTED
Kamma Naidu 42, ME 5.6', Anusham / Viruchigam from Cultured and Traditional Family Running Many Educational and Medical Institutions Divorcee. No Issues. Seeking Suitable and Educated Bride.
No Other Expectations.
94450 21512

URDU

AFFLUENT SME fair Chennai BE(IT) 28/5ft 10inch seeks Fair Pretty Slim Doctor/Engineer/any degree, bride. Send Biodata & photos to 8825740400

Looking For PIOUS, NAMAZI / GRADUATE BRIDE - 9840735868

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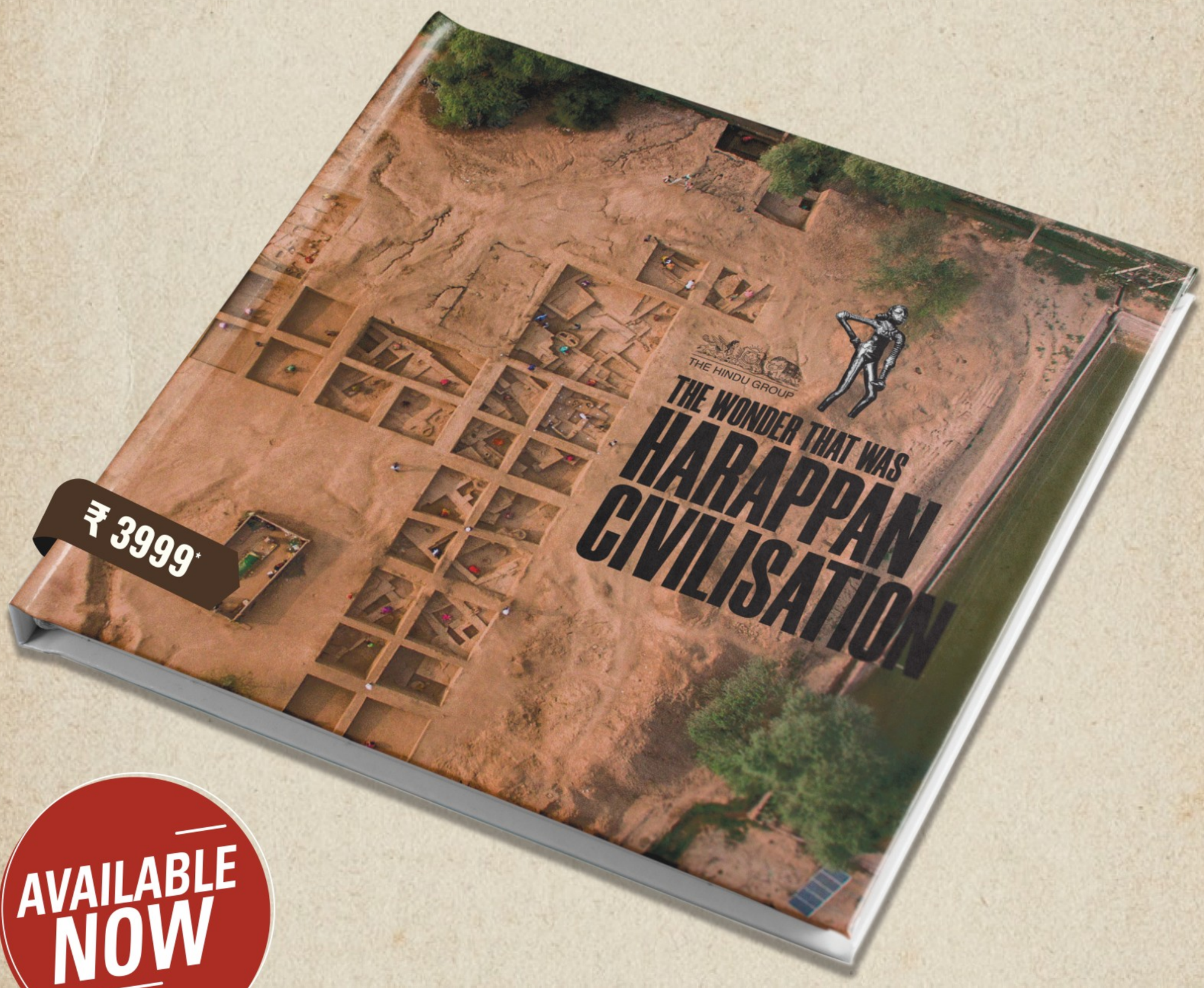

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Police told to register criminal defamation case against D. Roopa

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 24th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Friday directed the police to file a criminal defamation case against IPS officer D. Roopa Moudgil for posting objectionable pictures and videos of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Rohini Sindhuri on social media and also for accusing her of unethical practices.

Based on the private complaint filed by Ms. Sindhuri, the court took cognizance and directed the police to register a criminal defamation case under section 500 of IPC.

In her statement before the court, Mr. Sindhuri submitted that she came across a post on social media on February 18, posted by Ms. Roopa making an allegation that she went in for a "settlement" with the MLA regarding an official work. This cast aspersions on her work accusing her of a "cover-up" and that she was indulging in corrupt practices, she alleged. Ms. Roopa and Ms. Sindhuri had a public spat wherein Ms. Roopa made a series of allegations against the IAS officer pertaining to both personal and professional matters. The chief secretary had to step in and ask the two officers to stop speaking to media.

Ms. Sindhuri claimed all the allegations are false and were made with a mala fide intention to malign her character and conduct.

Minor allegedly raped, murdered

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 17-year-old PU student was allegedly raped and murdered by her boyfriend in Tataguni village near Kaggalipura on Friday.

The accused, Venkatesh, allegedly took her to an isolated place and sexually assaulted her, the police said. The victim started bleeding profusely and passed out. The accused called his friends for help before taking her to a hospital where the doctor referred her to another hospital where she was declared 'brought dead'. Based on the complaint by her family, the police arrested Venkatesh and took his friends, who are juveniles, into custody.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, MAR. 26		
RISE	06:20	SET 18:31
RISE	09:42	SET 22:54
MONDAY, MAR. 27		
RISE	06:19	SET 18:31
RISE	10:30	SET 23:50
TUESDAY, MAR. 28		
RISE	06:19	SET 18:31
RISE	11:21	SET 00:00

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	25
Mysuru	35	17
Bengaluru	35	22

Bengaluru Today
34°C A mostly dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C A warm and humid weather to prevail. Night will remain pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds may occur.

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THE HINDU
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Modi inaugurates Namma Metro's Whitefield line; commercial services to begin today

Commuters will be able to use the National Common Mobility Card from March 30; the card allows people to travel in Namma Metro and also in the metros of other cities

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ahead of the Karnataka Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the metro line to Whitefield.

He took a round-trip on a train from Whitefield (Kadugodi) to Sathya Sai Hospital station. During the 16-minute trip, the Prime Minister interacted with students, engineers of the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation and construction workers.

The BMRCL will start commercial operations on the Whitefield line on Sunday. Under phase II, the BMRCL has extended the Purple Line from Baiyappanahalli to Whitefield, a distance of 15 km. Of this, the 13 km stretch from Krishnarajpura to Whitefield was inaugurated on Saturday. The rest of the stretch between K.R. Pura and Baiyappanahalli is expected to be opened by mid-year.

BMRCL MD Anjum Parwez said the Prime Minister used the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) to travel on the Namma Metro.

A Namma Metro train passes by the ITPL campus in Whitefield, after the metro line was inaugurated on Saturday; (right) Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes the inaugural metro train from Whitefield (Kadugodi) to Krishnarajapura on Saturday. K. MURALI KUMAR; SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Krishnarajapura - Whitefield metro line

- The 13.71 km line is part of the extended Purple Line from Baiyappanahalli to Whitefield (15.5 km) built under phase II of Namma Metro
- Commercial operations to commence on March 26
- Bengaluru has 69.66 km of metro network with 63 stations
- It's the second largest metro network after Delhi
- The line to benefit 5 lakh to 6 lakh people living in the area, and employees of IT companies, industries, and other commercial establishments

Project cost ₹ 4,249 crore

Names of 12 stations
- Krishnarajapura
- Singayyanapalya
- Garudacharpalya
- Hoodi
- Seetharampalya
- Kundalahalli
- Nallurhalli
- Sri Sathya Sai Hospital
- Pattandur Agrahara
- Kadugodi Tree Park
- Hopefarm Channasandra
- Whitefield (Kadugodi)

- The BMRCL will deploy five sets of trains
- Frequency – **12 minutes**
- Travel time – **23 minutes**
- Fare – **₹35**
- BMRCL says travel time between K.R. Pura and Whitefield will reduce by 40% with the introduction of metro
- K.R. Pura and Whitefield stations have ample space for parking four-wheelers and two-wheelers
- Feeder service available from S.V. Road and Baiyappanahalli stations to Krishnarajapura station

Names of 12 stations

Open to public from today

On Sunday (March 26), when BMRCL opens Whitefield line to the public, the services will start at 7 a.m., and the last train will depart at 11 p.m. from the terminal stations. From Monday (March 27), train services will be available from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.

A BMRCL official said, "On the new line, we have deployed five sets of trains. They will run at 10 to 12-minute intervals. Normal schedules applicable at other reaches will apply here as well."

People who want to use the new line to reach Whitefield can alight at S.V. Road or Baiyappanahalli station and board a city bus to reach Krishnarajpura (K.R. Pura) station. The distance between S.V. Road and K.R. Pura is more than 5 km, and between Baiyappanahalli and K.R. Pura is around 4 km.

National Common Mobility Card

The BMRCL announced that Rupay NCMC cards of RBL Bank (the issuer bank for BMRCL) would be available to the public from Thursday (March 30) at the metro stations.

NCMC cards allow people to travel not only in Namma Metro but also in the metros of other cities. The cost of the card is ₹100 and the holder of the card has to recharge as per the travel requirement.

BMRCL MD Anjum Parwez told *The Hindu*, "In future, the BMTC will also start accepting these cards on city buses. When the number increases, we are contemplating roping in mobile app aggregators, and auto drivers to accept these cards."

Ms. Uma N., an engineer of the BMRCL, who works in the maintenance division, had a rare chance to interact with the Prime Minister. She told *The Hindu*, "I was very happy to meet the Prime Minister. I was part of a team of eight women engineers to interact with the PM. He enquired about what we do in Namma Metro."

The inaugural train was driven by two loco pilots Priyanaka P. and Priyanka Bellary.

PM asks party workers to work for a 'full-majority BJP govt.'

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Virtually launching the election campaign for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from Davangere in central Karnataka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke on the "benefits of the double engine government" and appealed to party workers to work towards getting a "full-majority BJP government" in Karnataka.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, along with other BJP leaders, felicitating Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Davangere on Saturday.

Mr. Modi, who arrived in an open vehicle to the main stage of 'Mahasangam', the conclusion of the Vijaya Sankalp Yatra of the State BJP, engaged the crowd in conversation to drive home the advantages of the "double engine" government.

The Prime Minister took the example of the PM Kissan Samman Yojana to elaborate on the benefits. "As long as the Congress-JDS coalition government was there, only a few farmers received the benefits. It was only after the BJP came to power that a sizable number of farmers got help," he said.

Lauding party workers for making the yatra a success, he appealed to them to take a pledge to work tirelessly for the next three months to convince the electorate about the advantages of the "double engine" government in order to win every booth. He said it was time to put an end to "make-break" coalition governments in Karnataka.

Referring to the incident of Opposition leader Siddaramaih allegedly slapping a party worker, Mr. Modi said: "What can you expect from a leader who does not respect a worker?"

Mr. Modi claimed that "all are equal in BJP" and claimed that party workers were his "strength, companions and good friends."

The Prime Minister termed the "guarantee cards" by Congress as "bundle of lies" and gave an example of the promises by Congress before its victory in Himachal Pradesh.

He said none of the poll promises had been met and the people of Karnataka should not fall into the trap built by lies by the Congress leaders.

He claimed that a full-majority BJP government would pave the way for developed Karnataka. "The whole world is looking at India and India is looking at Karnataka. And under the BJP, Karnataka will progress further," he said.

Mr. Modi also referred to BJP capturing power in the mayoral elections in Kalaburagi, the place of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and said that it was indication of the people's trust.

BSY in roadshow

Mr. Modi held a roadshow ahead of the rally, flanked by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and former Chief Minister and Lingayat strongman B.S. Yediyurappa. Central leaders of the BJP have been going out of their way to include Mr. Yediyurappa in election-related activities.

'Earlier governments played game with language'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accused political parties of 'playing a game' over languages without doing enough to support them, and alleged they did not want students from villages, poor families and Backward Classes to enter professional courses.

Understanding their challenges, the BJP government had presented an option of learning medical education in Indian languages including Kannada, he said, speaking after inaugurating the Sri Madhusudan Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (SMSIMSR) at Chickballapur.

"Kannada is a prosperous language; it is a language that increases the pride of the country. Earlier governments did not take steps towards teaching medical, engineering, and technical education in Kannada," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Modi left for Delhi from Shivamogga airport by a special flight on Saturday. Home Minister Araga Jnanendra, Lok Sabha member B.Y. Raghavendra, legislators, Deputy Commissioner R. Selvamani, SP G.K. Mithun Kumar and others bid him farewell.

Supreme Court expunges High Court's adverse remarks against IPS and IAS officers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Supreme Court has termed as "unfair, not in the interest of justice, a gross abuse of the process of law, and without justification" all the adverse remarks made by a single judge of the High Court of Karnataka against Additional Director General of Police Seemant Kumar Singh and the then Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban District, J. Manjunath.

Besides expunging all the adverse remarks made by the High Court against them, the Supreme Court has also quashed the orders passed against Mr. Singh and Mr. Manjunath, including summoning of certain records from the Central Bureau of Investigation related to a probe conducted 10 years ago against Mr. Singh in connection with illegal mining cases.

A Bench of Justice Krishna Murari and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah in its March 21 order expunged all the adverse remarks while allowing the three separate appeals filed by the State government, Mr. Singh and Mr. Manjunath.

The appellants had questioned the legality of adverse remarks made by a single judge in his order passed on July 4 and 7, 2022, against the Karnataka Anti Corruption Bureau, Mr. Manjunath and Mr. Singh, who was then heading the ACB [which is now defunct].

The Supreme Court said the actions of the High Court in making adverse remarks against the appellants are 'manifestly arbitrary and unjust'

During hearing of plea

The single judge had made the remarks during the hearing of a petition seeking bail filed by Mahesh P.S, a Deputy Tahsildar, who was arrested by the ACB in a ₹5 lakh bribery case. Mahesh was then working in the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban District.

The Supreme Court said that actions of the High Court in making adverse remarks against the appellants are "manifestly arbitrary and unjust" as they were not even parties or connected to the bail proceedings of an accused and no allegations against them were made in the petition.

Not party to bail

Pointing out that Mr. Singh was not a party to the bail proceedings personally as he was merely heading the ACB, the Supreme Court said that making "scathing and egregious remarks against him" by the High Court was "unreasonable and without justification... and unfair and not in the interest of justice."

On remarks made by the High Court against Mr. Manjunath, the Supreme Court said remarks are "a gross abuse of the process of law to pass such adverse remarks against him, as such remarks do not just cause injury to his reputation, but also has the potential to cause great prejudice to his actual trial."

Be cautious on remarks as live broadcast can damage reputation of parties, SC tells judges

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Noticing that adverse remarks had received wide publicity as the court proceedings were streamed live on the High Court's official YouTube channel, the Supreme Court said it attaches "a stricter standard of responsibility on judges while conducting such court proceedings."

"Remarks passed in court, due to the live broadcasting of court proceedings, now have ramifications that are far reaching, and as can be seen in the present case, can cause great injury to the reputation of the parties involved," the Supreme Court observed.

Advice

"In such a circumstance, it is essential for the courts to be extremely cautious while passing adverse remarks against the parties involved, and must do so with proper justification, in the right forum, and only if it is necessary," the Supreme Court advised the constitutional courts.

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).
RNI No. KARENG/1970/49960 • ISSN 0971 - 751X

INBRIEF

AIDWA conclave on women's representation in polls

The All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), Karnataka, on Saturday held an interactive programme to discuss the issue of representation of women in the 16th Legislative Assembly elections.

With women leaders of various political parties and women activists participating, the forum discussed problems that lead to poor representation of women in electoral process. It was also aimed at raising awareness amongst women voters, said K.S. Vimala, State vice-president of AIDWA.

Congress launches apartment cell, holds talks with RWAs

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee led by D.K. Shivakumar and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched the KPCC apartment cell, and held a meeting with Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) from across Bengaluru on Saturday. Both leaders addressed the audience, relaying their vision for a "Better Bengaluru". They launched the proposed action agenda for Bengaluru apartments. The party launched the "Apartment Mitra" initiative to create an open channel of interaction between apartment representatives and the party to relay issues and concerns. The cell is part of the KPCC's agenda to transform Bengaluru into a sustainable and inclusive city for all residents of Bengaluru, said the party.

Congress announces first list of 124 candidates for Assembly elections

Siddaramaiah will contest from Varuna and former Union Minister Muniyappa from Devanahalli (R); six MLAs have been denied ticket in this list

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, former Union Minister K.H. Muniyappa, KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, former KPCC president G. Parameshwara, and veteran leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa are among those who have found their names in the first list of 124 candidates released by the Congress on Saturday for elections to the Karnataka Legislative Assembly.

Karnataka will go to polls in April-May 2023, for which the Election Commission of India is expected to announce the schedule anytime.

Former CM's pick

Mr. Siddaramaiah will be contesting from Varuna in Mysuru district, represented by his son Yathindra now. Mr. Yathindra's name was missing from the first list. There was much speculation on the choice of constituency by Mr. Siddaramaiah, who won from Badami in the 2018 elections. The party has not announced the candidate for

K.H. Muniyappa

Siddaramaiah

Kolar seat, from where Mr. Siddaramaiah had shown interest to contest. The candidate from Badami too has not been announced.

Darshan Dhruvanarayan, son of former KPCC working president Dhruvanarayan who passed away recently, has been named from Nanjangud (SC) in Chamarajanagar district. Four-time MLC Puttanna, who quit the BJP a few days ago and joined the Congress, will be contesting from Rajajinagar in Bengaluru. He will be fighting against BJP veteran and former Minister S. Suresh Kumar. Six MLAs have been denied ticket in the first list.

Predictably, Mr. Shivakumar will contest from his Kanakapura Assembly constituency and Mr. Parameshwar from Koratagere (SC) constituency in Tumakuru district. AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge's son Priyank Kharge will be contesting from Chittapur (SC) in Kalaburagi and KPCC working president Eshwar Khandre will contest from Bhalki constituency in Bidar, according to the list announced by the Congress.

Kin in fray

Two father-and-son duo have made it to the first list. M. Krishnappa (Vijayanagar) and Priya Krishna (Govindarajanagar) have got ticket again from the Bengaluru constituencies.

Mr. Shivashankarappa (Davangere South) and S.S. Mallikarjun (Davangere North) have got ticket as well.

Seven-time MP Mr. Muniyappa, for the first time, will be contesting for the Assembly polls from Devanahalli (SC) reserved constituency on the outskirts of Bengaluru. His daughter Roopakala M. is fielded from Kolar Gold Field (SC) reserved constituency. KPCC working president and seven-time MLA Ramaligna Reddy (BTM Layout) and his daughter Sowmya Reddy (Jayanagar) will also be contesting

Of fathers, sons, and daughters

- **M. Krishnappa** (Vijayanagar) and **Priya Krishna** (Govindarajanagar)
- **Shamanur Shivashankarappa** (Davangere South) and **S.S. Mallikarjun** (Davangere North)
- **K.H. Muniyappa** (Devanahalli-reserved) and **Roopakala M.** (Kolar Gold Fields-reserved)
- **Ramalinga Reddy** (BTM Layout) and **Sowmya Reddy** (Jayanagar)

elections. Mithun M. Rai, who contested from Mangaluru Lok Sabha constituency in 2019, has been given ticket for contesting from Moodabidri Assembly segment in Dakshina Kannada. Former Chief Minister late Dharam Singh's son Ajay Dharam Singh has been given ticket from Jevargi Kalaburagi and Ashok Kheny from Bidar South.

Prominent names

Other prominent candidates who bagged ticket include H.K. Patil (Gadag), R.V. Deshapande (Haliyal), S. Madhu Bangarappa (Sorab), K.J. George (Sarvagnanagar), Dinesh Gundu Rao (Gandhi Nagar).

BJP MP Bache Gowda's son Sharath Kumar Bache Gowda will contest from Hosakote on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Kusuma H., who lost in the bypolls in Rajarajeshwarinagar against Minister Muniratna, will be contesting again.

First time MLAs and women candidates Laxmi Ravindra Hebbalkar from Belgaum Rural and Anjali Nimbalkar from Khanapur have got ticket in Belagavi, the border district of Karnataka.

Minorities, SC/ST

Candidates belonging to minority community such as Rizwan Arshad (Shivajinagar), N.A. Haris (Shanti Nagar), B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan (Chamarajpet) – all in Bengaluru – along with Tanveer Sait (Narasimharaja) in Mysuru, Iqbal Hussain H.A. (Ramanagara), U.T. Abdul Khader Ali Fareed (Mangaluru), Kaneez Fatima (Gulbarga Uttar) and Rahim Khan (Bidar) have been given ticket. A total of 22 candidates belonging to SC category and nine from ST category have been given tickets.

New faces

Among new faces, Anup Iyengar has been given ticket from Malleswaram in Bengaluru, while Rakshith Shivaram will contest from Belthangady in Dakshina Kannada district. Lone MLC U.B. Venkatesh is given ticket from Basavanagudi in Bengaluru. Congress will have to now announce candidates for another 100 constituencies.

'Left' Dalits upset over the break-up of internal quota recommended by Cabinet

Commission's proposal and govt.'s recommendation

Community	Estimated population as per Sadashiva Commission	Recommendation as per Sadashiva Commission	Recommended by the State Cabinet
SC (Left)	33.47%	6%	6%
SC (Right)	32.01%	5%	5.5%
SC (Touchables)	23.64%	3%	4.5%
SC (Others)	4.65%	1%	1%
Total		15%	17%

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

'Left' Dalits, who were at the forefront of struggle for internal reservation among the Scheduled Castes, are upset at the break-up now recommended by the State government to slice up the reservation pie. The benefit of the recent hike in reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC) by 2% has been accorded mainly to SC (Touchables), they argue. They say that the reason for demanding internal reservation was that this section was already cornering most benefits of the reservation.

The State Cabinet on Friday adopted a resolution to recommend to the Union government to divide the hiked 17% reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC) in the State giving SC (Left) 6%, SC (Right) 5.5%, SC (Touchable) 4.5%, and SC (Others) 1%.

What commission said

Justice Sadashiva Commission that submitted its report recommending internal reservation among SCs, gave a break up of the estimated population of these communities as SC (Left) 33.47%, SC (Right) 32.01%, SC (Touchables) 23.64%, and SC (Others) 4.65% in a press note issued then. While the report is yet to be tabled in the Assembly, it is learnt to have recommended internal reservation in proportion to their population and backwardness: SC (Left) 6%, SC (Right) 5%, SC (Touchables) 3%, and SC (Others) 1%, dividing up 15% reservation for SCs in the State when the report was submitted in 2012.

> The government according most of the benefits of the hiked reservation to SC (Touchables), which includes Koracha, Korama, Lambani and Bhovis, is a travesty of justice. We will stage protests against this move and will also challenge it legally.
>
> **MAVALLI SHANKAR**
> Dalit Sangharsha Samithi leader

However, the State government recently accepted the recommendations of the Justice Nagamohan Das Committee and hiked the reservation for SCs in the State from 15% to 17%. While distributing the hiked 2%, the State government has given an additional 1.5% to SC (Touchables) and 0.5% to SC (Right) while retaining 6% and 1% for SC (Left) and SC (Others), respectively, both considered to be the most backward communities among SCs. Notably, SC (Left) and SC (Touchables) are known to vote predominantly for BJP.

This has caused consternation among SC (Left) and SC (Right) communities, even as Madara Chennaiah, a seer from the SC (Left) community and closely associated with the BJP, has welcomed the move.

Dalit Sangharsha Samithi leader Mavalli Shankar said: "The movement for internal reservation was to ensure that those communities that have remained more backward get reservation benefits. But the government according most of the benefits of the hiked reservation to SC (Touchables), which includes Koracha, Korama, Lambani and Bhovis, is a travesty of justice. We will stage protests against this move and will also challenge it legally."

Ambanna Aroli, a SC (Left) leader and State convener of SC Internal Reservation Struggle Committee, said the principles of natural justice and the rationale behind providing internal reservation dictated that the benefit of the hike in reservation be transferred to SC (Left) community giving them 8% internal reservation.

Why not right away?

"The fact that the government has accepted the logic of internal reservation is conceding that there has been injustice done against us all. Ironically we have suffered another injustice in this so-called effort to correct it," he said. "The government is again trying to mislead the community by only recommending internal reservation to the Union government. Why cannot the 'Double Engine' government deliver internal reservation immediately?" he questioned.

Decision to remove Muslims from OBC list 'legally untenable', say experts

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

There seems to be no data-based rationale behind Karnataka Cabinet's decision to scrap reservation for Muslims under Category 2B in the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and distribute them among the two dominant communities of Vokkaligas and Lingayats under the two newly formed categories 2C and 2D.

It is learnt that Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes had not only not recommended these interventions, but had specifically recommended that no changes be effected in the reservation matrix till it submitted its final report. This could only create possibilities of legal challenges, argue legal experts.

In December 2022, acting on an interim report by Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, the State Cabinet created two new categories 2C and 2D for Vokkaligas and Lingayats. Law Minister J.C. Madhuswamy had then said the quantum of reservation for these categories will be decided based on the final report of the commission.

Days after commission Chairman K. Jayaprakash Hegde told mediapersons that the final report cannot be hurried, the State Cabinet on Friday made changes to the reservation matrix. A senior Minister in the government, on condition of anonymity, told *The Hindu* that the decision was "ad-hoc" and was borne out of "political compulsions."

"On what basis did the government decide to hike reservation to Vokkaligas and Lingayats by 2% each? More significantly, why not hike reservation for other communities in Categories 1 and 2A that are more backward than the land owning communities?" questioned C.S. Dwarakanath, former chairman of the commission.

> **'Muslims were included in OBC list based on a study of their socio-economic conditions and recommendations by L.G. Havanur and Chinnappa Reddy Commissions'**

Benefit to community?

On moving Muslims from OBC list and classifying them under Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), the government argued that it would benefit the community, as it is a larger pool. However, experts argue that while backwardness is a socio-economic category, EWS is an economic category and the two cannot be easily interchanged.

"Muslims were included in the OBC list based on a study of their socio-economic conditions and recommendations by L.G. Havanur and Chinnappa Reddy Commissions. This has been further confirmed by the Sachar Committee Report. On what basis did the State government decide that Muslims were no longer "backward" and they were to be considered a "forward" community?," asked political scientist Muzzafar Assadi, adding that this was a systematic attempt to "structurally weaken the community and marginalise it further."

"Indira Sawhney judgment of the Supreme Court clearly says any addition or deletion of a community from the reservation matrix must be based on an empirical data-based study by the commission, said Mr. Dwarakanath.

Former Chief Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy on Saturday came down heavily on the decision to scrap reservation for Muslims, which was instituted by party supremo H.D. Deve Gowda in 1995. "The decision is against the principles of social justice," he said.

Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah said taking away reservation from one community to give it to another would only provoke social disharmony and that was indeed the aim of the BJP.

Not religion-based

Experts have termed the Chief Minister's argument that Muslims were removed from the OBC reservation matrix as the Constitution did not provide for reservation based on religion as "misleading."

Prof. Assadi said Muslims were categorised as backward class and not given reservation based on religion. "If that was the case and now the government has corrected the mistake, how come Christians, Jains, Buddhists still continue to be under the OBC list?" Mr. Dwarakanath asked.

Panchamasali quota: Seer ends protest, but a section of agitation committee miffed at government decision

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Expressing satisfaction over the State Cabinet's new reservation matrix announced on Friday, Basava Jaya Mrutyunjaya Swami, honorary president of the Panchamasali reservation agitation committee and seer of the Lingayat Panchamasali Peetha of Kudalasangama, on Saturday announced that the 71-day stir has been withdrawn.

Although the seer said it was an unanimous decision to withdraw the quota stir, a section of the committee members led by former MLA and Congress leader Vijayanand Kashappanavar, who is the national president of the agitation committee, said they were unhappy with the government's reservation matrix.

The huge crowd of members of the Panchamasali community during a protest seeking reservation, at Hirebagewadi, Belagavi district in December 2022.

Chaos at press meet

There was chaos at the press conference when supporters of BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal and Mr. Kashappanavar got involved in an argument over the issue. However, the situation was brought under control following the seer's intervention.

"While our demand was for inclusion in 2A, the community, along with other sects of Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, has now been put in the newly created 2D category. This is not what we wanted. We had asked for 15% reservation and have got only 7%," Mr. Kashappanavar said.

Alleging that the 2D reservation was just an election gimmick by the BJP government, Mr. Kashappanavar said he would step down from the national president's post in protest.

'Snatching reservation'

He also objected to the government moving Muslims from 2A to the Economically weaker Sections (EWS) quota. "It is not fair to snatch the reservation of another community to give it to us. It is an injustice to that community," he said.

Addressing presspersons, the seer said the committee had decided to withdraw the stir as of now in the wake of elections. "We will discuss and decide on whether to further seek enhanced reservation for the community after the elections. We have been pushed from 3B to 2D category of the Backward Classes list and the reservation for our community has been increased from 5% to 7%. Although we are yet to get the government notification in this regard, this is our initial victory," the seer said.

Tusker electrocuted after power line falls on it

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

A male wild elephant was electrocuted after a power line fell on it, purportedly after the animal pushed an electric post on a private land near Coimbatore, early on Saturday. This is the fifth elephant to have been electrocuted in Tamil Nadu this month.

The incident took place on a barren patch of land in Poochiyur village, around 1 km from the nearest forest boundary.

Senior officials from the Forest Department visited the site, and said efforts were being made for the post-mortem of the elephant.

Stalin seeks SC Bench in Chennai

Other demands made by T.N. Chief Minister are social justice and inclusivity in the appointment of judges; and making Tamil the language of the Madras High Court, besides English

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Saturday requested Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud to look into three demands: a Supreme Court Bench in Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata; social justice and inclusivity in the appointment of judges; and making Tamil the language of the Madras High Court, besides English.

He was speaking at a ceremony to lay the foundation for an additional court building on the Madurai district court campus.

Responding to the demands raised by Mr. Stalin, the Chief Justice of India said he had striven to ensure access to the Supreme Court for lawyers and law students who do not reside in Delhi. He said the Supreme Court had introduced a hybrid mode of functioning: lawyers could appear before the court physically and virtually. The proceedings of cases before the Constitutional Bench were being live-streamed. This gave the law students an opportunity to watch the proceedings. "Modern technology has enabled us to reach out to the citizens," he said.

M.K. Stalin.

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Court language

The Chief Justice of India said making Tamil a court language might require a constitutional amendment as Article 348 of the Constitution states that proceedings in the Supreme Court and the High Courts shall be in English.

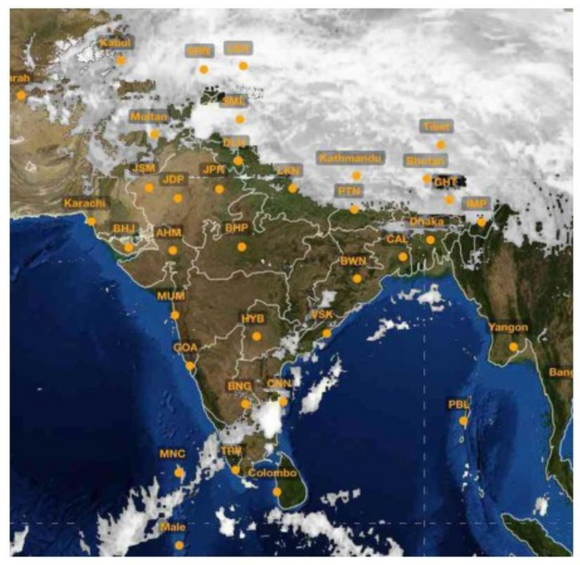
He said he was aware of the language barriers. "English is not our first language. We think and formulate in our mother tongue. However, lawyers should not feel demotivated." He requested Madras High Court judges to be encouraging towards advocates so that they could present their cases effectively.

He said the Supreme Court judgments were being translated into the regional languages for people to keep up with the developments in law. The judgments were being digitised so that people could access them for free. He urged the Madras High Court to translate its judgments into Tamil for the benefit of litigants, lawyers and government employees.

As for inclusivity, factors for consideration had been laid out, he said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning/ gusty wind likely at isolated places over Meghalaya, Manipur, Sikkim, Bihar, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	31.8	19.4	Kozhikode	—	35.7	26.0
Ahmedabad	—	33.0	21.0	Kurnool	—	37.5	26.2
Aizawl	—	28.0	12.8	Lucknow	—	31.1	20.0
Allahabad	—	36.3	20.6	Madurai	—	37.8	24.7
Bengaluru	—	32.6	22.8	Mangaluru	—	33.4	23.4
Bhopal	—	—	18.4	Mumbai	—	30.7	20.5
Bhubaneswar	—	35.2	23.6	Mysuru	—	36.1	18.4
Chandigarh	13	27.0	16.3	New Delhi	12.2	30.4	15.3
Chennai	—	33.1	27.5	Patna	—	34.4	19.6
Coimbatore	22	35.4	23.0	Port Blair	0.4	31.9	24.2
Dehradun	5	26.9	15.2	Puducherry	—	34.8	25.4
Gangtok	12	15.8	10.7	Pune	—	34.4	17.4
Goa	—	34.0	21.5	Raipur	—	36.7	23.0
Guwahati	—	29.0	16.5	Ranchi	—	32.7	19.2
Hubballi	—	37.0	19.0	Shillong	5	20.5	10.8
Hyderabad	—	34.2	23.6	Shimla	8	15.4	6.6
Imphal	—	28.6	13.8	Srinagar	1.5	14.4	5.8
Jaipur	—	29.3	18.1	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.5	25.2
Kochi	—	32.4	26.0	Tiruchi	—	37.3	25.6
Kohima	2	20.0	10.8	Vijayawada	—	34.2	26.6
Kolkata	—	35.0	25.0	Visakhapatnam	—	32.2	26.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.11	.17	.24	120	124	
Bengaluru	7	56	.31	41	55	
Chennai	.25	.18	.45	36	33	
Delhi	.19	.21	.45	156	109	
Hyderabad	9	3	171	65	89	
Kolkata	.24	.27	.22	41	64	
Lucknow	9	.41	.63	114	113	
Mumbai	.23	125	.85	196	154	
Pune	.99	134	113	82	73	
Visakhapatnam	.17	.35	.28	38	66	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Chhapra, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 337 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 17

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

SIT probing paper leak serves notice on Telangana BJP chief

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Telangana police, probing the question paper leak of the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC), issued notice to the State BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday, directing that he appear before the team on March 26.

The notices were served on Mr. Sanjay following his comments alleging the involvement of IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao's office in the paper leak. The SIT officials summoned him to appear with documents in his possession in the interest of the investigation on March 16 at their office in Himayatnagar.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sanjay said that he does not trust the investigation conducted by the SIT and that he would not be sharing any details or documents with them. He demanded an inquiry by a sitting judge of the High Court into the issue.

Police arrest Cong. workers at Kalpetta after sit-in protest

The Hindu Bureau
KALPETTA

Tensions prevailed at the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) office at Kalpetta in Kerala on Saturday after a group of Congress workers staged a sit-in at the gate and attempted to barge into the office after climbing over the barricades placed there, leading to a scuffle with the police.

The Congress workers had taken out a march in protest against the decision to disqualify Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Congress workers taking out a protest march in Kalpetta. C.V. SHIBU

The protesters burned effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and raised slogans against him and Home Minister Amit Shah. Later, they blocked traffic on the Kozhikode-Kollegal National Highway-766. Tensions were eased only after the police arrested and removed the workers. As many as 60 workers were arrested and later granted bail.

Malayalam actor Innocent in critical state

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The health condition of senior Malayalam actor Innocent, 75, who was admitted to a private hospital here three weeks ago for cancer-related complications, remains critical, according to a medical bulletin issued by the hospital authorities at 5 p.m. on Saturday.

He is currently under Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) support, said the bulletin issued by the authorities of VPS Lakeshore Hospital.

Mercury levels are still high in Kodaikanal soil, says former journalist

Geetha Srimathi
CHENNAI

Two decades after people of Kodaikanal discovered mishandling of mercury by a global conglomerate, levels of the toxic metal are still vastly higher than normal in the hill station's soil, says Ameer Shahul, former journalist and author of *Heavy Metal: How a Global Corporation Poisoned Kodaikanal*.

In the book, Mr. Shahul traces how an American thermometer factory was taken over by Hindustan-Unilever in Kodaikanal in 1983, the efforts that led to the factory's closure, as well as the legal travails and health implications for the people and factory workers.

The book was formally launched by Erik Solheim, former Executive Director of UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and former Norway Environment Minister, in Chennai on Saturday.

Mercury poisoning

Over the years, it was found that many people had lost their lives due to severe health complications as Hindustan-Unilever unit carelessly discarded mercury-laden scrap to local dealers, Mr. Solheim rued.

Drawing parallels with the mercury poisoning disaster in Minamata, Japan, which came to light in the 1950s, Mr. Solheim said, "When a tragedy such as this happens, the most important thing we can do is to make certain it does not happen again." In 2017, when Mr. Solheim headed the UNEP, a historic agreement called the 'Minamata Convention of Mercury' was signed by over 160 countries, including India.

Mr. Shahul said while a drop in wildlife activity in prominent sites such as Tiger Shola was indicative of the environmental effects of mercury sediments, there had been a lack of Kodaikanal-specific research on the subject. "We didn't have a clear picture", he said, while adding that "traces of Mercury are likely to reside in Kodaikanal forest soil for decades or centuries".

The Tamil translation of the book will be available in the next two months, he said.

'No hike in power tariffs in A.P. in 2023-24 fiscal'

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) Chairman C.V. Nagarjuna Reddy has said that there will not be any increase in the power charges in the financial year 2023-24.

"Every electricity consumer can heave a sigh of relief as there will be no additional burden on the electricity charges," Mr. Nagarjuna Reddy said while addressing the media persons here on Saturday.

कर्मचारी राज्य बीमा निगम अस्पताल, एजुकोंन, कोल्लम, केरल 691505
(श्रम एव राजगार मत्रालय, भारत सरकार)
EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION HOSPITAL,
(Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India)
EZHUKONE, KOLLAM, KERALA - 691505
दूरभाष/Phone: 0474 – 2522454, 2529200 ईमेल/Email: ms-ezhukone.ke@esic.nic.in
वेब साइट/Website: www.esic.gov.in

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION - WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

The Medical Superintendent, ESIC Hospital Ezhukone invites application for the post of medical officers on contract basis for Senior Residents, Full Time/ Part Time Specialists in different specialties & Homeo Physician.

Date of Walk- in- interview - 11 April 2023 & 12 April 2023 - 10:00 AM
Venue: ESIC Hospital Ezhukone.

For details, please refer our website **www.esic.gov.in/recruitments**

Sd/- **Medical Superintendent**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our Client/s is desirous to purchase the Schedule Property from its owner, **MRS. KUTHETHUR POORNIMA**, wife of Late K. Narayana Das, presently residing at No. 42, Gangadeeswarar Koil Street, Purusawalkam, Chennai – 600 084, Tamil Nadu, who represented that she is the sole and absolute owner of Residential Apartment bearing **No. 503** in **Fifth Floor, 'E' Wing** in the Project known as **"MITTAL TOWERS"**, situated at **No. 21, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore – 560 001,** which was bequeathed to her by her husband **Late K Narayana Das,** who purchased it under Sale Deed dated 19/07/2011 vide Document No.SHV-1-0736-2011-12 registered in the office of Sub Registrar, Shivajinagar , Bangalore.

Any person/s having objection for the transaction with the above person in respect of the Schedule Property or claims to have any right, title or interest in the Schedule Property, he/she shall intimate the same in writing with documentary evidence to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. In the event no such claim is received within the stipulated time, our client shall proceed with aforesaid transaction as if no such claim exists or that they have been waived or abandoned.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Apartment bearing **No. 503** in **Fifth Floor, 'E' Wing** admeasuring 1830 sft., in the Project known as **"MITTAL TOWERS"** constructed on the North Eastern portion of the property bearing N**ew No. 21 (old No. 6/47), Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore – 560 0001,** comprising of 4 Bedrooms with attached bath, Dining Hall, Drawing Room, Pooja Room, Kitchen, Varandah Balcony etc., with one covered Car Parking No. 503 in the Ground Floor, with an undivided share of right, title and interest of 0.511% equivalent to 410.80 sft., in the landed property and bounded on;

East by: Mahindra & Mahindra's Guest House bearing No. 5/46;
West by: Flat No. 504 – 'E' Wing;
North by: Flat No. 502 – 'E' Wing; and
South By: Mahalakshmi Chamber, bearing No. 6/46.

Sd/-
Place: Bangalore
Dated: 25/03/2023
Divya Vani H.K., B.A., LL.M.
Advocate
RAVI LOBO & CO.,
No. 37/7, Meanee Avenue,
Tank Road,S.C. Garden,
Bangalore – 560 042,
Ph: (080) 25591702 / 41123363

Government of Karnataka
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, CHITRADURGA.
No.EE:PWD:CTA:JE-2:Tender-124:2022-23: Dated: 24.03.2023
SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders are invited from registered Contractors in KPWD for the following work through e-Procurement Portal as per standard tender documents rules.

Name of work: Two cover System: Head of Account 8443 Deposit Contributio: 1) Construction of Flat form to Shivanakere lower stage MS Steel Platform and Upper stage RCC Platform in Holalkere Taluk of Chitradurga District under SH-47 (W.I. 164356)/2nd Call. Estimate Cost Rs. 150.00Lakhs

Tender dates are as mentioned below: Late Date & time for Tender Queries/ Clarifications: 30.03.2023 Time 17:30. Last Date & time for receipt of tenders: 31.03.2023 Time 16:00. Date & time for opening of Technical Bid: 01.04.2023 Time 16:15. Date & time for opening of Financial Bid: 03.04.2023 Time 11:00.

Further details can be obtained from this office and H.P. Company helpline Numbers 080-25501216 and 080-25501227.

RO No. 1191: DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/2022-23 Sd/- Executive Engineer

Respect court ruling on Kerala University, says Governor

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan has said he respected the Kerala High Court ruling that quashed his orders to constitute a search-cum-selection committee for the next Vice-Chancellor and withdraw 15 Senate members in Kerala University.

Pointing out that society is governed by the rule of law, he said judgments made by the judiciary deserved all respect and should be implemented, he told mediapersons on Saturday.

Despite the Raj Bhavan reportedly receiving legal opinion on the issue, it is yet to decide on whether to appeal against the verdict.

The Single Bench of Justice Sathish Ninan found the constitution of the search-cum-selection committee and the appointment of its convener to be not in accordance with Section 10(1) of the Kerala University Act, 1974. It was also observed the constitution of the committee was not in accordance with the Kerala University First Statutes.

Arif Mohammed Khan

Deviation from norms

Besides, while the norms prescribed appointing a convener from one among the three members of the committee, Raj Bhavan chose one of the two nominees as the convener.

Referring to the Raj Bhavan order withdrawing its nominees in the Senate, the court noted that the nominee is not a mere mouthpiece or an agent, and his actions need to be in accordance with law. It found the order was not based on any reason, but rather founded on prejudice.

"The Chancellor was under a misconception regarding the role of nominee, which also contributed to the arbitrary action," the judgment stated.

The Left-aligned Syndicate and Senate members, on the other hand, claimed a "moral victory" in their tussle with the Governor.

According to Syndicate member K.H. Babujan, the ruling vindicated their stance towards the contentious decisions made by Raj Bhavan.

TTD to release online tickets tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUMALA

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, on Saturday, said that online quota of ₹300 Special Entry Darshan tickets would be made available from 11.00 am on Monday.

KALABURAGI MAHANAGARA PALIKE, KALABURAGI.
No: KMP/EE/DB/15th Finance/14/2022-23 Date: 24-03-2023
:: E-PROCUREMENT TENDER ::

1) Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi invites 07 tenders as per KTPP act, 1999 and Rules, 2000 through e-procurement Portal in KW- 1, 2, 3 & 4 Tender bid documents under 2022-23 SFC (Untied Grant), 2022-23 Corporation Fund, 2022-23 National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) Fund & 2021-22 & 2022-23 15th Finance Fund for the year 2022-23 scheme. The bid documents can be downloaded from e-portal website and any information related to these tenders will be updated on www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in. 2) Estimate Sanction cost: **lowest amount Rs. 15.00 lakhs & Highest amount Rs. 200.00 lakhs,** 3) EMD Value: Lowest Rs. 37500.00 & Highest Rs. 300000.00, 4) Last date of Bid Submission: **12-04-2023 upto 4-30 pm.** 5) Technical Bid Opening date: **13-04-2023 upto 4-35 pm.** 6) Financial Bid Opening date: **15-04-2023 after 11:30 am.** 7) Office Address : Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi. 8) For more details visit Office Website **http://www.kalaburagicity.mrc.gov.in/**

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1594/MC&A/2022-23 **Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi**

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: CEE/BGKT/TRNS/SEE(O)/AEE-1/28721-28 Date: 24.03.2023
TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Only through E-Procurement Mode)

KPTCL invites tender on Electronic mode for the following works on **Total Turnkey basis.**

1) Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN-H01/22-23/HIREKERUR for **Replacement of 1x10 MVA, 110/11 kV transformer by 1x20 MVA, 110/11 kV transformer at 110 kV Hirekerur sub-station in Hirekerur taluk, Haveri district including supply of equipments/ materials, erection, civil works, testing and commissioning. (Tender No.: KPTCL//2022-23/SS/WORK_INDENT10513).**

2) Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/CEE/TRNS/BGKT/110KV/STN- H02/22-23/KUD for **Replacement of 1X10 MVA, 110/11 kV transformer by 1X20 MVA, 110/11 kV transformer at 110kV KUD Dharwad sub-station in Dharwad Taluk & District including supply of equipments / materials, erection, civil works, testing and commissioning. (Tender No.: KPTCL//2022-23/SS/WORK_INDENT10512).**

The tenders will be received through e-procurement portal only. The details regarding participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL web site **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink "e-Procurement-KPTCL" or to **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **1:00 p.m. of 27.03.2023.** Any other details can be had from the office of the under signed during office hours.

Sd/-, Chief Engineer (Electy), Transmission Zone, KPTCL, Zonal Office Complex, Opp: Sector No.45, Navanagar, Bagalkot-587 103.

From Page One

In hill State, point and shoot plastic

Sensitisation workshops are being held for traders along the route, as the QR codes will be provided to them to paste onto each product.

According to Mayur Dixit, District Magistrate of Rudraprayag, where Kedarnath sits, the project last year saved 1.63 lakh single-use plastic bottles from entering the fragile mountain ecosystem. The daily solid waste generated in just Kedarnath amounts to about 1,000 kg, during the yatra season, from April to October. Over 15 lakh people visited Kedarnath last year. He is hoping that this year's initiative will reduce the huge piles of trash strewn around the sacred shrine, mountains, and water bodies. In his weekly radio address on May 29, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had appealed to people to keep the area clean.

The larger idea behind the initiative is to bring about a behavioural change in pilgrims. Last year, over 40 lakh people travelled to the four shrines. This year, the yatra, set to begin from April 22, has had over 2 lakh registrations as of March 23.

Govt. pressed for action out of panic, says Rahul

Raising the rhetorical stakes, Mr. Gandhi declared that he would not be cowed by a "prison term". The "drama", as he described it, began with his speech in Parliament on February 7 as part of the Motion of Thanks to the President when he asked a set of questions to the government.

"I asked Prime Minister very specific set of questions. My question was, '₹20,000 crore or $3 billion came into the shell companies owned by Mr. Adani. Mr. Adani could not have generated this money, he is in infrastructure business. Where did this money come from, whose money is it?'," he said. Mr. Gandhi claimed the government was rattled by the evidence that he produced on the floor of the House about Mr. Modi's relationship with Mr. Adani. His speech was expunged from the parliamentary record.

This was followed with the "distraction", as he labelled it, of blaming him for making "anti-India" statements in London. "BJP Ministers lied about me in Parliament. They made statements to distract from the Adani issue... They claim that I asked foreign forces to help India, most ridiculous statement. I have never made such a statement," he added. He said he was not allowed to counter the allegations made by the Ministers, despite his repeated appeals to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Flanked by Ashok Gehlot and Bhupesh Baghel, Chief Ministers of Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, respectively, Mr. Gandhi struck a defiant note. "I am here to defend the democratic voice of the Indian people, I will continue doing that. I am not scared of these threats, disqualifications or prison sentences...," he said. Asked about the BJP's demand that he apologise for his comments made in London as well as for his 2019 comment on the Modi surname that led to his conviction for defamation, he said, "My name is not Savarkar, my name is Gandhi. Gandhi doesn't apologise!"

To repeated questions on whether he would challenge his disqualification, Mr. Gandhi unequivocally stated that it did not matter to him. "It doesn't make a difference to me whether I am inside or outside of the Parliament," he said.

To queries on the implications of his disqualification for Opposition dynamics, he thanked every Opposition party that came out in support of him and said everyone would work together.

Asked if he was worried about the long-term impact of the conviction, which could bar him from contesting elections for the next six years, he said, "Do I look worried? I am excited! These people have given the best gift they could give me."

Be vigilant against interest rate risks, Minister tells banks

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Amid fears of contagion effects from banking crises in the U.S. and Europe, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has asked banks to remain vigilant against "interest rate risks" and undertake regular stress tests, even as public sector bankers assured her that all possible steps are being taken to safeguard themselves from any potential financial shock.

Ms. Sitharaman, chairing a review of public sector banks' (PSBs) performance on Saturday, also urged banks to try attracting more deposits now that the government has reduced "the tax arbitrage in some debt instruments", hinting at the Finance Bill changes to strip some of the tax benefits that are available to debt mutual funds from April 1.

"An open discussion was held with the MDs and CEOs of PSBs on the global scenario comprising the failure of the Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and the Signature Bank (SB) along with issues leading to the crisis in Credit Suisse," the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The Minister reviewed banks' "exposure" to this "developing and immediate external global financial stress", it said.

Ms. Sitharaman's plea to banks to be watchful of "interest rate risks" assumes significance as the rising interest rate cycle being pursued by central banks globally to rein in inflation has led to some of the pressures on banks such as SVB as the value of their older bond holdings has dipped.

Canada says it is following developments in Punjab

Press Trust of India
TORONTO

Canada is "very closely" following the developments in Punjab and will continue to address the concerns of the community, the country's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly has said amid the State police's crackdown on radical preacher Amritpal Singh.

Ms. Joly was answering a question from Indo-Canadian MP Iqwinder S. Gaheer in the House of Commons on March 23. "We are aware of the evolving situation in Punjab, and are following it very closely. We look forward to a return to a more stable situation," she said.

"Canadians can always count on the Government of Canada to make sure that we will continue to address the concerns of many members of the community," she added.

Meanwhile, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi has urged people residing abroad not to believe "inaccurate and motivated narratives" that are being circulated on social media.

Akal Takht chief priest slams police over Amritpal case

Why have they not been able to arrest him, asks Giani Harpreet Singh; says it is unfortunate that the police arrested several youngsters and also blocked social media accounts of journalists

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

As pro-Khalistan preacher Amritpal Singh remained elusive almost a week after a crackdown began against him and his outfit, Waris Punjab De, Giani Harpreet Singh, chief priest of Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of Sikhism, on Saturday raised questions over the ability of the Punjab Police.

Mr. Harpreet Singh said a pertinent question was bound to rise about why the police had not been able to arrest Mr. Amritpal so far. "It certainly raises questions over their ability and working. Besides, if the government has arrested him then it should clarify the situation. Also, I would ask Amritpal that if he is at large, then he should come forward and cooperate with the investigation," Mr. Harpreet Singh said.

He said it was unfortunate that the police had arrested several youngsters from their homes and also blocked social media accounts of some journalists. "If any youth had shared something on Facebook or just wrote a comment, to take them into custody and spoil their career is not correct. Punjab government should stop it," he said.

On the run: Associates of Amritpal Singh being brought to Baba Bakala court near Amritsar amid tight security, on Thursday. PTI

44 released

On Friday, the police released as many as 44 persons who were taken into preventive custody during the ongoing operation against those trying to disturb law and order in the State. Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order) Arpit Shukla said in the larger interest of the public and keeping in view that youngsters should not suffer, the police had decided to release those persons who had a "minimum role" or were just following Mr. Amritpal for religious sentiments.

The police have arrested 207 persons for disturbing peace and harmony in the State, of which 30 were found to be involved in substantive criminal activities. The remaining were under preventive arrest, the police said.

Tough decisions

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal praised the State government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on the law and order situation in Punjab.

Addressing a gathering at Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar, Mr. Kejriwal said in the past few days, some people tried to vitiate the atmosphere of Punjab, but the government did not allow anyone to disturb peace.

He said sometimes tough decisions had to be taken to maintain law and order and the AAP government led by Mr. Mann was capable of taking such decisions. Mr. Kejriwal said the Punjab government had handled the situation very well and it was brought under control without firing a single bullet or shedding blood.

Couple held in Jammu for links with Amritpal

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

The J&K Police on Saturday arrested a couple for alleged links with the Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh and handed them over to the Punjab Police. Meanwhile, the gun licences issued from Kishtwar and Ramban districts of J&K to Mr. Singh's two bodyguards have been cancelled.

The police identified the arrested couple as Amrik Singh and his wife Paramjit Kour, residents of R.S. Pura, Jammu. They have been detained for reportedly having links with Papalpreet Singh, a close aide of Amritpal Singh, officials said. The mobile phones of the couple have also been seized. The matter is being investigated by the Punjab Police and they will be questioning the couple, officials said.

Officials said the district magistrates of Kishtwar and Ramban districts in the Jammu province cancelled the arms licences of the two bodyguards, Talwinder Singh and Virender Singh.

Report sheds light on role of procession routes in riots

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A 176-page report published by a collective of citizens and lawyers brings to the fore how organisers of religious processions pick certain communally sensitive routes to provoke violence.

In his foreword to the report, former Supreme Court judge Justice Rohinton F. Nariman underscored the "primary importance to sensitise the police force in all the States of India". "This can be done by first informing them that Muslims situated in India are Indians," he stressed.

The report by the Citizens and Lawyers Initiative, called *Routes of Wrath – Weaponising Religious Processions – Communal Violence During Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti (April 2022)*, presents a detailed case-by-case analysis of the germination and spread of communal riots, the response by the authorities and the police in specific instances and how processions held on religious occasions become a stage to spark hatred.

"No cause of interfaith riots has been as recurrent and widespread as the religious procession," senior advocate C.U. Singh, the editor of the report, wrote. He referred to the "pusillanimity" of the police in dealing with the steady manner in which such religious processions gather and vent hate, en route.

The report concludes by noting that "available evidence corroborates statements by civil society groups, lawyers, academics and activists, that India has reached a stage of perpetual violence". It refers to an open letter by more than a 100 retired civil servants to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which stated that "the administration of law has become the means by which the minorities, particularly the Muslim community, can be kept in a state of perpetual fear".

'Significant drop' achieved in EPF's actuarial deficit, Centre informs RS

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

A "significant drop" has been achieved in the actuarial deficit of the Employees' Pension Fund (EPF), according to the Union government.

This has become possible thanks to improvement in the quality of data in respect of members of the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995 and amendments carried out based on recommendations of the actuarial valuation report, and suggestions of the Union Finance Ministry while agreeing to the minimum pension proposal. Since September 1, 2014, a minimum pension of ₹1,000 per month under the EPS is being provided through budgetary support.

This was stated in an action taken report (ATR) tabled in the Rajya Sabha, along with the reply of Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Rameswar Teli. It was in response to Congress leader Digvijaya Singh's question on the status of implementation of the recommendations of the 147th report of the Committee on Petitions. The Committee submitted its recommendations to the Upper House in September 2013 and an ATR was sent to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat in May 2014.

An action taken report was tabled in the Rajya Sabha

Among the amendments were the calculation of pensionable salary on the basis of 60 months' average instead of 12 months' average, and the determination of eligible service on the basis of contributory service instead of simple length of service.

As suggested by the Committee on Petitions, efforts were made to collect information on members, and the valuation for 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 was carried out with the data of almost 60% of active contributing members and 100% of the pensioners, resulting in better quality and reliability of the valuation exercise. The valuation of EPF was completed till 2019.

Annuity-based scheme

As regards the suggestion for conducting valuation every three years and replacing the EPS with a Provident Fund-cum-Pension Annuity Scheme with mandatory annuitisation, the ATR mentioned that "no consensus could emerge" on the proposal for an annuity-based scheme during two meetings of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the EPF held in September 2010 and January 2014. Besides, it was felt that the annual valuation should continue.

On the recommendation for providing price rise neutralisation in the pension amount to offset inflation, the government took the stand that it had not been "not found feasible" to provide for increase in pension by neutralising the effect of inflation, as the EPS was a funded scheme with features of defined benefits and defined contribution.

As for better and efficient management of the corpus, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EFPO) had appointed fund managers in September 2008.

The investments were being carried out as per the pattern of investment prescribed by the Finance Ministry, notified by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and in tune with the guidelines laid down by the EPF's CBT.

To another question on inoperative EPF accounts, Mr. Teli replied that as on March 31, 2022, the total amount lying in inoperative accounts was ₹4,962.7 crore.

Mahatma's great-grandson rubbishes J&K L-G's remarks

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Tushar Gandhi, the great-grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, has sent an autobiography of Gandhiji to Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha, after the L-G stated that the Mahatma "did not possess any law degree".

"M.K. Gandhi passed 2 Matrics 1 from Alfred High School Rajkot, 2nd its equivalent in London, British Matriculation. He acquired, by studying and passing exams a Law Degree from Inner Temple, a law college affiliated to London University and simultaneously got two diplomas, one in Latin the other in French," Tushar Gandhi tweeted.

SC gives States, UTs, HCs 3 months to set up online RTI portals

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the States and Union Territories to set up and operationalise online Right to Information (RTI) portals within three months to ensure transparency in governance.

The top court gave the same three months' time to Registrar Generals of State High Courts to establish and run online RTI portals, in their respective High Courts and district courts.

The recent order by a Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud came in a petition filed by the Pravasi Legal Cell, represented by advocate Jose Abraham.

Mr. Abraham argued that Section 6(1) of the Right to Information Act, 2005 stipulated that an information seeker had a statutory right to move an application through electronic means. However, several High Courts and most district courts entertain only physical RTI applications.

"The Supreme Court of India has recently set up an online portal facilitating requests for the supply of information. Online facilities would considerably facilitate the fulfilment of the objects of the Act. Though the Act was enacted in October 2005, after a lapse of 17 years, online web portals are still to be operationalised by some of the High Courts," the Supreme Court recorded in the recent order.

India and U.S. envoys meet to discuss priorities

Press Trust of India
WASHINGTON

India's envoy here, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, met the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, and discussed with him the immediate priorities in deepening the bilateral strategic partnership.

The meeting took place soon after Mr. Garcetti was sworn in on Friday, as the next U.S. envoy to India.

The swearing-in of Mr. Garcetti ended over two years of delay to fill one of Washington's most critical diplomatic positions.

"As he prepares to depart for India, we discussed some immediate priorities in deepening the bilateral partnership, in line with our leaders' vision," Mr. Sandhu said.

J&K leaders say social media rules violate rights of govt. staff

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tarigami on Saturday termed the J&K's new stringent social media policy for government employees as "violation of their rights".

Whether it was blacklisting contractors or imposing a social media gag order on employees, a clear intention of "dispossessing people in J&K of their livelihood has emerged", Ms. Mufti said. "Authorities have become judge, jury and executioner in complete violation of the fundamental rights of people," she added.

Mr. Tarigami said being a government employee doesn't mean giving up all legitimate constitutional rights as a citizen. "Barring them from expressing their views about the issues concerning them is tantamount to stripping them of their basic rights. They must be treated as citizens, not as subjects," Mr. Tarigami said.

Mehbooba Mufti

Still kept out of Lok Sabha, Faizal moves top court

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Disqualified Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal has moved the Supreme Court against the Lok Sabha Secretariat for not withdrawing a notification disqualifying him as a Member of Parliament upon his conviction and 10-year sentence, which was later suspended by the Kerala High Court.

Mr. Faizal stood disqualified from the membership of the Lok Sabha from January 11, the date of his conviction in an attempt-to-murder case pronounced by a sessions court in Kavaratti, according to a notification issued on January 13 by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

In his petition filed in the apex court through advocate K.R. Sasiprabhu, Mr. Faizal said the Lok Sabha Secretariat failed to withdraw the notification despite the fact that his conviction was stayed by the high court on January 25.

The plea also pointed out that Mr. Faizal was denied participation in the ongoing Budget Session of Parliament.

Rahul's disqualification and Adani row not linked: BJP

Congress leader has the right to criticise but not abuse anyone, says Ravi Shankar Prasad, adding that the BJP will launch a campaign against him for insulting the Backward Class community

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday slammed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and accused him of "distracting from the issue". Mr. Prasad alleged that Mr. Gandhi had "thoughtfully" insulted people belonging to the Backward Classes.

"Rahul Gandhi has been punished for his act of 2019 and today he says that he speaks thoughtfully. This means that what he said in 2019 was [said] thoughtfully. He said, 'Why are all Modis thieves?' In North India, people of the Modi community are a Backward and Extremely Backward Class and they are large in number. He has insulted the people of the backward community. He has the right to criticise but not to abuse anyone. There are seven other defamation cases against Rahul Gandhi. There is no correlation between today's Adani row and the sentence given by the court," Mr. Prasad said at the BJP's Patna office during a media interaction.

BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad addressing a press conference at the party office in Patna on Saturday. ANI

He further said that the BJP will launch a nationwide campaign against Mr. Gandhi for insulting the Backward Classes.

Mr. Prasad raised the question of why Mr. Gandhi had not taken the help of advocates that "the Congress has in large numbers". He alleged that the Congress had not pleaded in Mr. Gandhi's defence in the Surat court in order to secure an advantage in the upcoming Karnataka Assembly election. He gave the example of Congress leader Pawan Khera, who recently secured a stay order from the Supreme Court within an hour.

Mr. Prasad pointed out that Rahul Gandhi was not the only leader to have been disqualified, and that 32 leaders have faced a similar fate, including six leaders of the BJP.

He named several projects of the Adani Group that were started during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, and alleged that the Congress stood for the "four C's – cut, corruption, commission and Congress".

In response to a query from *The Hindu* on Mr. Gandhi's question as to whom the alleged ₹20,000 crore invested by the Adani Group in shell companies belonged, Mr. Prasad said, "If he is making a baseless allegation, then the Adani Group will give the answer. I am not sitting here to defend Adani or anyone. What more can you expect from that person [Mr. Gandhi] who asks for proof of being a martyr from soldiers?"

Cong. announces day-long dharna

NEW DELHI
The Congress on Saturday announced a day-long dharna at all its State and district headquarters (in front of the Gandhi statue at each centre) on Sunday in protest against Rahul Gandhi's disqualification. In Delhi, it will be held at Raj Ghat, where, as per sources, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and all the party's MPs would be present.

Plea seeks removal of defamation as ground for disqualification

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A Ph.D. student from Kerala on Saturday urged the Supreme Court to remove "criminal defamation" as a ground to "automatically" expel MPs.

Aabha Muralidharan said parliamentarians are the voice of the people they represent. Their expulsion has a "chilling effect on the right of representation" of their constituents.

The petitioner, represented by advocates Deepak Prakash and Sriram Parakkat, said the immediate reason for her petition is the "automatic disqualification" of Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi on Friday, on the basis of a 2013 verdict of the Supreme Court in *Lily Thomas versus Union of India*.

'Chilling effect'

"The offence of criminal defamation must be exempted from the sweep of the judgment in *Lily Thomas*... The freedom of speech and expression enjoyed by a Member of the Parliament is an extension of the voice of millions of his supporters. If criminal defamation, which technically has a maximum punishment of only two years, is not removed from the sweeping effect of the judgment in *Lily Thomas*, it will have a chilling effect on the right of representation of the citizens," she argued in her petition.

An MP's freedom of speech is an extension of the voice of millions, the petition argued.

She said the Constitution makers had never intended to use criminal defamation as a "reasonable restriction" on free speech. "The operations of *Lily Thomas* are being blatantly misused for wreaking personal vengeance in political parties. The present scenario provides a blanket disqualification, irrespective of the nature, gravity, and seriousness of the offences, allegedly against the Member concerned," the petition said.

Centre played active role in Rahul's hasty removal: JD(U)

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

The Janata Dal(U) on Saturday accused the Union government of playing an "active role in ensuring hasty disqualification" of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as a Lok Sabha member.

The remarks came a day after the party chose to stay away from the protest by the *Mahagatbandhan* (grand alliance) against the move.

"Due procedure should be followed in disqualification of an MP upon conviction. There should be a notification from the Election Commission on which the Speaker should act after seeking approval of the President. Obviously, this takes some time," JD(U) president Rajiv Ranjan Singh said. "In case of Rahul Gandhi though, the disqualification was ordered in less than 24 hours of the court order. The haste shows that the government at the Centre has played an active role in the issue."

This showed the ruling dispensation's *baukhalahat aur hatasha* (exasperation and desperation), Mr. Singh said.

Land-for-job case: Tejashwi Yadav appears before CBI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday questioned Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav in connection with the land-for-job case, allegedly involving his father and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad and others. The Enforcement Directorate recorded the statement of his sister and Rajya Sabha member, Misa Bharti, in the same matter.

After about eight hours of questioning, Mr. Yadav met Ms. Bharti at her official residence. She had been quizzed by the ED for close to seven hours.

The CBI had earlier summoned Mr. Yadav thrice but he expressed his inability to join the probe. He had cited his wife's health, in response to the summons seeking his appearance on March 11.

AFSPA areas further reduced owing to improved security situation: Shah

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the Centre had decided to "reduce the disturbed areas" under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in Nagaland, Assam and Manipur due to the "significant improvement in the security situation in northeast India".

The AFSPA has been removed from one district of Assam, and within the limits of four police stations (Wangoi, Leimakhong, Nambol and Moirang) in Manipur, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said.

A day earlier, the AFSPA was removed from the jurisdiction of three police stations in the Wokha and Zunheboto districts of Nagaland, while one police station in Arunachal Pradesh – Chowkham – was declared a "Disturbed Area" under the Act.

"Compared to the year 2014, there is a reduction of 76% in the extremist incidents in the year 2022. Similarly, the deaths of security personnel and civilians have come down by 90% and 97% respectively during this period," the Ministry pointed out in a statement.

The Ministry said that the Central government was in constant dialogue with the State Governments and other stakeholders, and due to the improvement in the security situation, the 'Disturbed Area' notification under the AFSPA was completely withdrawn from Tripura in 2015 and Meghalaya in 2018.

भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान मोहाली
(शिक्षा मंत्रालय भारत सरकार द्वारा स्थापित)
सैक्टर-81, नॉलेज सिटी, पो. ओ. मनौली, एस.ए.एस. नगर, मोहाली, पंजाब-140306
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH MOHALI
(Estd. By Ministry of Education, Govt of India)
Sector-81, Knowledge city, PO-Manauli, SAS Nagar Mohali-140306, Punjab
IISER Mohali

PhD and Integrated PhD Admissions (August 2023 session)

Applications are invited from prospective candidates for admission to the **PhD** and **Integrated PhD Program** at IISER Mohali. Applications are invited in the areas of Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Earth & Environmental Sciences and Humanities & Social Sciences for **PhD**. Applications are also invited in Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Mathematical Sciences for **Integrated PhD**, session beginning in August 2023. Candidates interested in pursuing research in interdisciplinary areas are also encouraged to apply.

Eligibility Criteria, Other details and Application procedure: The details of eligibility criteria, online application form and application procedure are available at https://www.iisermohali.ac.in

Last date: The online application facility will be open till **12.00 noon, April 06, 2023 (Thursday).**

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : SE/PHC/MPM/113-118/2022-2023, JJM-WSS to Munniyur,Chelembra ,Thenchipplalam and Vallikuunu GPs– Pkg- IV -Transformers, RW & CW pump sets Thrikkalangode, Porur and Pandikkad GPs- Construction of OHSR and GLSR, Laying of Gravity mains, Distributions lines and Providing FHTCs to Pandikkad and Porur GPs and allied works. JJM-CWSS to Morayur, Pulpatta, Pookottur GPs- Construction of OHSR, supply Laying balance distribution with FHTCs and allied works. JJM-CWSS to Karulai,Amarambalam, Moothedam and Chokkad GPs -Distribution system and providing FHTCs to Moothedam GPs. JJM-CARWSS to Moorkanad -construction WTP and allied works &Supply and laying of CWPM; **EMD :** Rs. 200000 to 500000; **Tender fee :** Rs. 11025 to 16540; **Last Date for submitting Tender :** 17-04-2023 03:00:pm; **Phone :** 04832974871
Website : **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**
Superintending Engineer,
PH Circle, Malappuram
KWA-JB-GL-6-1952-2022-23

VAIKUNTH MEHTA NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT (VAMNICOM)
(A National Institute under the aegis of National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT), Promoted by Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India)
Ganeshkhind Road, Near Pune University, Pune-411007, Maharashtra, India

TENDER NOTICE

Bids are invited through GeM Portal (Bid Number-GEM/2023/B/3293557) from reputed Companies for Making Documentary / Film on Cooperatives. For further details please visit our website **www.vamnicom.gov.in/tenders**

Registrar
For Director, VAMNICOM, Pune

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Central Offices, Stores and Purchase Dept, K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560 027

No.:KST/CO/CS/1228/2022-23 Date:25.03.2023

NOTICE INVITING 15 Dated: 24/03/2023

Tenders (Pre-qualification and or commercial offers) through e-procurement portal (**http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**) are invited for supply of the following goods/services/equipments:

Tender Nos.	Nomenclature of Items / Services / Equipment	Tender Value in Crores Rs. (Approx)	Last date for submission of tender
A-38/22-23	Procurement of Brake and Brake Parts	43.00	28/04/2023
A-39/22-23	Procurement of Piston Assembly & Ring Sets	3.50	28/04/2023
G-119/22-23	Procurement of Jumbo Thermal Roll for ETM Machines	6.73	28/04/2023
G-120/22-23	Procurement of Automotive Batteries	1.50	13/04/2023
G-121/22-23	Procurement of Pre-cured Tread Rubber & Allied Materials	31.50	28/04/2023
G-122/22-23	Procurement of Automotive Glasses	7.00	28/04/2023
G-123/22-23	Procurement of POP Rivets	1.20	13/04/2023
G-124/22-23	Procurement of Synthetic Rubber Adhesive	0.50	13/04/2023
	SHORT TERM TENDERS		
A-40/22-23	Procurement of Spring Leaves	18.00	13/04/2023
G-118/22-23	Procurement of Tyre, Tube, Flap sets, Tubless Radial Tyre and Additional Tubes and flaps.	95.20	13/04/2023

Further any addendum / corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, scope, other tender terms and conditions etc, will be uploaded / published through e-portal only.

NOTE: Interested suppliers need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information log into **http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** In case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell (Phone No. 080-22230960, 080-22234115). Interested suppliers may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. Mail to eprocurementhelodesk@gmail.com for further information if required. In case of bidders need assistance from KSRTC, can communicate at cosp@ksrtc.org (Contact : 7760990225, 7760990224).

Sd/-
Controller of Stores & Purchases

DIPR/CP/JA/5468/2022-23

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED
CIN U75302KL2017SGC05027

E - TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited for the following projects of Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Limited Project Area 1) Request for proposal RFP for Selection of Contractor for Development of Smart Roads and Underground Ducting Including Utility Shifting of Water Supply and Power lines in ABD area Under Smart (Corporation Roads) in Thiruvananthapuram.

Sl. No.	Name of Project	E-Tender ID	PAC Amount (Exclusive Of GST)	Bid Submission Last Date
Selection of Contractor for Development of Smart Roads and Underground Ducting Including Utility Shifting of Water Supply and Power lines in ABD area Under Smart (Corporation Roads) in Thiruvananthapuram.				
1.	Road ID 41 (Kothuval to Sabhapathi kovil street Road)	2023_SCTLT_550644_2	Rs.4,57,70,352	30/03/2023
2.	Road ID 42 (KK Road)	2023_SCTLT_550795_2	Rs.2,59,55,590	30/03/2023
3	Road ID 43 (Marakkada Road)	2023_SCTLT_550815_2	Rs.2,29,11,634	30/03/2023
4	Road ID 90A (Dharmalayam Road)	2023_SCTLT_551327_2	Rs.2,51,54,527	30/03/2023

Date and Time of Opening Price Bid: To Be Intimated Separately to Technically Qualified Bidders by e- mail.
All the RFP documents and details are available on the e-Procurement Website. Bids are only accepted online on the Website https://etenders.kerala.gov.in

(Sd/-) **Chief Executive Officer,**
Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Ltd.

भारत सरकार / **Government of India** / अंतरिक्ष विभाग / **Department of Space**
भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन / **Indian Space Research Organisation**
इसरो नोदन कॉम्प्लेक्स / **ISRO Propulsion Complex**
महेंद्रगिरि / **Mahendragiri – 627 133**

विज्ञापन सं./Advertisement No.:आईपीआरसी/IPRC/भर्ती/RMT/2023/01 दिनांक/Dated: 26.03.2023

महेंद्रगिरि, तिरुनेलवेली जिला, तमिलनाडु में स्थित इसरो नोदन कॉम्प्लेक्स(आईपीआरसी) के लिए निम्नलिखित पदों की भर्ती हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं। / Applications are invited for the following posts for ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) located at Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu.

पद कोड Post Code	विद्या विशेष Discipline	रिक्ति(यों) की संख्या / No. of Vacancy (ies)				
		अना. / UR	अनु.जा./ SC	अ.पि.व./ OBC	आ.क.व./ EWS	कुल/ Total
तकनीकी सहायक (वेतन मैट्रिक्स में स्तर 7 - ₹44,900/- – ₹1,42,400/-) Technical Assistant (Level 7 in the Pay Matrix - ₹44,900/- – ₹1,42,400/-)						
013	यांत्रिक Mechanical	9	3	2	1	15
		ऊपर में से 1 रिक्ति दिव्यांगजन (श्र.वि.) के लिए आरक्षित है Out of the above 1 vacancy is reserved for PwBD (HH)				
018	इलेक्ट्रॉनिकी Electronics	1	1	2	-	4
001	विद्युत् Electrical	1	-	-	-	1
019	कंप्यूटर विज्ञान Computer Science	-	1	-	-	1
026	सिविल Civil	-	-	2	1	3
तकनीशियन 'बी' (वेतन मैट्रिक्स में स्तर 3 - ₹21,700/- – ₹69,100/-) Technician 'B' (Level 3 in the Pay Matrix - ₹21,700/- – ₹69,100/-)						
003	फिटर Fitter	6	4	9	1	20
		ऊपर में से 2 रिक्तियां भूतपूर्व सैनिक के लिए आरक्षित है / Out of the above 2 vacancies are reserved for Ex-Servicemen				
015	इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मेकैनिक Electronic Mechanic	1	-	1	1	3
		ऊपर में से 1 रिक्ति दिव्यांगजन (द.वि.) के लिए आरक्षित है Out of the above 1 vacancy is reserved for PwBD (VH)				
020	वेल्डर Welder	1	1	1	-	3
014	प्रशीतन व वातानुकूलन Refrigeration & AC	-	1	-	-	1
007	इलेक्ट्रिशियन Electrician	1	-	-	1	2
005	प्लंबर Plumber	1	-	-	-	1
ड्राफ्ट्समैन 'बी' (वेतन मैट्रिक्स में स्तर 3 - ₹21,700/- – ₹69,100/-) Draughtsman 'B' (Level 3 in the Pay Matrix - ₹21,700/- – ₹69,100/-)						
027	सिविल Civil	1	-	-	-	1
		ऊपर में से रिक्ति दिव्यांगजन (अ.वि.) के लिए आरक्षित है The above vacancy is reserved for PwBD (OH)				
भारी वाहन चालक 'ए' (वेतन मैट्रिक्स में स्तर 2 - ₹19,900/- – ₹63,200/-) Heavy Vehicle Driver 'A' (Level 2 in the Pay Matrix - ₹19,900/- – ₹63,200/-)						
010	भारी वाहन चालक Heavy Vehicle Driver	2	1	2	-	5
		ऊपर में से 3 रिक्तियां भूतपूर्व सैनिक के लिए आरक्षित है Out of the above 3 vacancies are reserved for Ex-Servicemen				
लघु वाहन चालक 'ए' (वेतन मैट्रिक्स में स्तर 2 - ₹19,900/- – ₹63,200/-) Light Vehicle Driver 'A' (Level 2 in the Pay Matrix - ₹19,900/- – ₹63,200/-)						
030	लघु वाहन चालक Light Vehicle Driver	1	1	-	-	2
		ऊपर में से 1 रिक्ति भूतपूर्व सैनिक के लिए आरक्षित है Out of the above 1 vacancy is reserved for Ex-Servicemen				
फायरमैन 'ए' (वेतन मैट्रिक्स में स्तर 2 - ₹19,900/- – ₹63,200/-) FIREMAN 'A' (Level-2 in the Pay Matrix - ₹19,900/- – ₹63,200/-)						
008	फायरमैन 'ए' Fireman 'A'	1	-	-	-	1

इच्छुक उम्मीदवार विस्तृत विज्ञापन/जानकारी/मार्गदर्शन प्राप्त करने और आवेदन करने के लिए **http://www.iprc.gov.in/** पर जाएं। पोर्टल **27.03.2023 से 24.04.2023** तक आवेदन करने के लिए खुला रहेगा। / Interested candidates may visit **http://www.iprc.gov.in/** for detailed advertisement/information/guidelines and for applying. The portal will be open for applying from **27.03.2023 to 24.04.2023.**

प्रशासनिक अधिकारी (भर्ती) /Administrative Officer (Recruitment)
इसरो नोदन कॉम्प्लेक्स /ISRO Propulsion Complex

INBRIEF

Lights turned off in various cities to mark 'Earth Hour'

Lights at public places and some temples in different cities including Mumbai, Kolkata and New Delhi were turned off between 8.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. as part of the global 'Earth Hour' event. The annual event is observed in order to raise awareness of energy conservation. Lights at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and also the famous Akshardham temple in New Delhi were turned off in support of nature and the planet on Saturday. Similarly, in Mumbai, videos emerged from the famous Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (in photo) with lights being switched off for an hour to mark Earth Hour. ANI

Breach of privilege: Sanjay Raut's notice referred to V-P

Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut's breach of privilege notice was on Saturday referred to Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar by Maharashtra Legislative Council Deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe, who termed Mr. Raut's response "unsatisfactory". Mr. Raut was served the notice earlier this month for calling the Legislature "*chor mandal*" (body of thieves). "So I do not completely agree with his response and don't find it satisfactory. Therefore, I am referring the breach of privilege notice to Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice-President for appropriate action," Ms. Gorhe said in the Council.

Charred bodies of 3 Mizoram residents found in Myanmar

The Mizoram Police on Saturday recovered charred bodies of three residents of the State's Siaha district, who went missing since March 19, from Myanmar. The three, including a woman, had gone missing after setting out for Myanmar from Ainak, a border village in Siaha district. People on either side of the 1,643-km India-Myanmar border can move freely within a 32-km band despite certain restrictions owing to the civil war in Myanmar. "The charred bodies of the three persons, apparently held hostage by miscreants, were recovered from a jungle," Mizoram's Inspector-General of Police (Law and Order), Lalbiakthanga Khiangte told *The Hindu*.

Oncologist, 20 others get Assam's civilian awards

An oncologist, mobile theatre veteran, lawn bowler, mask maker, and cremation volunteer were among 21 personalities given Assam's civilian awards. The awards were conferred by Governor Gulab Chand Kataria on March 24. The awards were given to the 21 personalities in recognition of their outstanding contributions in the field of health, art and culture, sports, science, agriculture, tourism, and entrepreneurship. Assam Baibhav, the highest civilian award, was presented to oncologist Tapan Kumar Saikia for his contribution to cancer care and public service. Hailing from Naharkatiya, he is the director of oncology at the Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre in Mumbai.

SUDOKU

	4	6		3	8			5
	9	1						
7				4				
	5							2
		2	1		7	6		
9							4	
				1				6
						4	1	
6			7	8		3	2	

No.SS5749 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	5	4	8	2	9	6	1
2	6	8	9	1	5	3	4	7
9	4	1	6	7	3	2	8	5
4	8	9	1	2	7	5	3	6
7	5	3	8	4	6	1	9	2
1	2	6	5	3	9	4	7	8
5	9	2	3	6	8	7	1	4
8	3	4	7	5	1	6	2	9
6	1	7	2	9	4	8	5	3

COVID-19 tests down, need to be scaled up, says govt.

The Health Ministry directs the States to take stock of medicine, ICU beds, medical equipment, oxygen cylinders and vaccination; it plans a nationwide mock drill on April 10 and 11

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Saturday warned that at a time when the country was registering a sustained increase in the trajectory of COVID-19 cases (since mid-February) in some States, testing for the infection had declined.

Worryingly, the current testing levels are insufficient as compared to the standards prescribed by the World Health Organization – 140 tests per million.

In its advisory, the Ministry said that testing at the level of districts and blocks also varied, with some States heavily relying on the less sensitive rapid antigen tests.

"It is critical to maintain optimum testing for COVID-19 to identify any emerging hotspots and take pre-emptive steps to curb virus transmission," said the advisory.

According to the Ministry as on date, most of the active COVID-19 cases in the country were largely being reported by a few States – Kerala (26.4%), Maharashtra (21.7%), Gujarat (13.9%), Karnataka (8.6%) and Tamil Nadu (6.3%).

A health worker collects a swab sample of a passenger as random COVID-19 testing starts at various airports across the country. PTI

The Ministry has directed the States to take stock of hospital preparedness including drugs, beds including ICU ones, medical equipment, medical oxygen, capacity building of human resources on existing guidelines, as well as vaccination coverage.

Nationwide mock drill

Meanwhile, a nationwide mock drill is being planned on April 10 and 11 wherein health facilities (both public and private) from all districts are expected to participate.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in the advisory that while the rates of hospitalisation and death due to the disease remained low largely because of the significant coverage achieved in terms of COVID-19 vaccination rates by all States/Union Territories, this gradual rise in cases needed reinvigorated public health actions to contain the surge.

The States and Union Territories have been asked to keep a close watch on the evolving etiologies (causes of diseases) of influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) cases. Giving an insight on the issue of seasonal circulation of pan-respiratory pathogens in the country, the Ministry said that India usually saw a seasonal rise in influenza cases from January to March and again from August to October. At present, the most prominent subtypes of influenza in circulation in the country seem to be influenza A (H1Nl) and influenza A (H3N2).

Clinical dilemma

It added that COVID-19 and influenza shared a number of similarities in terms of mode of transmission, high risk population, clinical signs and symptoms.

"While this may present a clinical dilemma for the attending doctors in terms of diagnosis, this also renders both these diseases easily preventable by following simple public health measures like avoiding overcrowded and poorly ventilated settings, using handkerchief/tissue while sneezing or coughing, wearing a mask in crowded and closed settings, maintaining hand hygiene, avoiding spitting in public places etc.," the Ministry said.

Bengal BJP wants to ally with Left to defeat Trinamool

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

In the Sagardighi bypoll, Congress, supported by Left Front, had defeated Trinamool nominee

Over the past few weeks, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari has created a buzz in the political circles of the State by his attempts to bring all Opposition parties on one platform against the ruling Trinamool Congress.

But what has stood out is that in calling for a "people's *mahajyot* (grand alliance)", the BJP leader has also repeatedly reached out to the Left parties. Earlier this week, Mr. Adhikari showered praise on Left Front chairperson and CPI (M) Polit Bureau member Biman Bose. The BJP leader appreciated the frugal lifestyle of the veteran leader, and said such simplicity was missing in politics these days.

"Those against the Trinamool Congress need to join the '*mahajyot*' keeping their respective ideologies intact. There will be only two camps in the battle ahead, one Trinamool and one against the Trinamool," he said on Friday.

The Nandigram MLA also stressed that all Opposition parties should ensure that there should be "no vote for Trinamool". The 2021 Assembly polls saw several civil rights groups and farmers groups giving the call of "No vote for BJP".

Mr. Adhikari's recent utterances come after the Sagardighi Assembly polls where the Left Front-supported Congress candidate trumped the Trinamool nominee in a constituency with 65% minority support base. While the BJP did put up a candidate, the "strategic support" of the party was acknowledged by State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

The bypoll provided an example of how a united Opposition can defeat the Trinamool. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee described it as an "immoral" alliance.

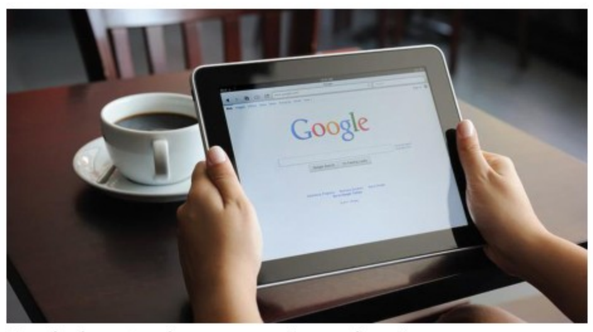
The Left parties rejected the proposal of the Leader of the Opposition without wasting any time. Responding to Mr. Adhikari's proposal, Mr. Bose said the Left parties would not join any programme with the BJP-RSS combine.

Using machine-learning, Google search becomes bilingual in India, whether users ask for it or not

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

There's a reason people in India have been seeing bilingual search results on Google. Since December 2022, the company has been picking up the region a user is physically located and processing their search history to provide information in two languages. Users in New Delhi will see results in English and Hindi, and those in Tamil Nadu see results in English and Tamil.

"Using advanced machine learning-based translation models and a cross-language search technology, we'll serve you high-quality and relevant content in your local language alongside English results, if that's how you choose to view them," Google had said. However, users appear to be getting such result pages without actually choosing to do so.



Google shows two languages on its search engine. GETTY IMAGES

"Why does Google decide on its own to randomly show me some search results in Hindi or Gujarati," Mumbai-based communications professional Minari Shah asked on Twitter earlier this month. Another user, who said her mother tongue was Bengali, responded that she was getting results and news suggestions in Kannada and Hindi.

The change appears to be rolling out even to users who never opted to use one of the languages. Take New Delhi, a city where the names of roads are displayed in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. Users browsing with a device set to English are likely to see results in just English and Hindi, unless their phone is set to a language other than English to begin with.

"At Google in India, our aim is to help everyone benefit from using the Internet in their daily lives," a Google spokesperson said, in an email statement. "That means breaking down language barriers through our products and helping people interact with technology just as they would in the real world. It's not a simple task and our work is far from done, but we remain committed to improving our language experience and building products that are accessible to everyone."

Bilingual option later

The company shared that it would work in the future on giving users a choice to opt out of the bilingual search results that it is serving in the country.

For now, though, the way to view results in just English is not straightforward, according to testing done on multiple devices by *The Hindu*. On the Google app on mobile, going to Settings and changing the language from 'English (India)' to any other international variant is not possible: the app refuses to change the English variant. Before that, users need to change their entire device's language away from 'English (India)', and only then will they be able to change the language to a different English variant. And then, the region too has to be changed away from India.

That's the only way to change search result languages away from bilingual to English for Indian users. A similarly inconsistent dynamic plays out on YouTube, where the company said on Twitter that it will use certain 'signals' based on users' viewing history and location to decide which language comments in foreign tongues get translated to: even if a user's set language is English, the streaming app may decide unilaterally that the output language for translated comments is Hindi. The company said it was working to make language preferences easier to choose.

Rail network will reach up to LoC, says Vaishnaw

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday said the Kashmir Valley's rail connectivity with the rest of the country will be started by the next year and the rail network will be expanded up to LoC. "Jammu and Kashmir will have Vande Bharat trains next year as Jammu-Srinagar rail link will be opened this year only," Mr. Vaishnaw, who took stock of the Budgam-Baramulla rail link, said.

"A detailed discussion is being held over the doubling of lines in Baramulla. Three more connections are to be done in this line. Electrification work is almost done. Extending the line till LoC will be also discussed with the L-G (Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha)," Mr. Vaishnaw said.

India's first cable-stayed railway bridge nearing completion

Maitri Porecha
REASI DISTRICT

Twenty years on, the delayed construction of the Anji Khad bridge in Reasi district of Jammu is a major chink in the Indian Railways' ambitious plan to connect Kashmir to Jammu and the rest of India seamlessly.

After missing multiple deadlines, including those in 2017 and 2022, the ₹400-crore project to build India's first cable-stayed rail bridge is finally nearing completion. "We will launch the superstructure deck of the bridge by the first week of May. Ancillary works such as fine tuning the cabling, deck casting, linking of railway tracks will then follow, which will be critical to the completion of the project," a senior official working onsite told *The Hindu*.

Perched precariously over the Anji Khad river that swells every monsoon, the bridge is supported by a single pylon – a large vertical tower-like structure – soaring 1,086 feet from the river bed, the height of a 77-storey building. Surrounded by mountain peaks, the construction site is buffeted by billowing, gusty winds.

Dangerous winds

The official, who did not wish to be named, said that the structure of the bridge itself could sustain winds blowing up to 216 km per hour. "However, every time the windspeed crosses 45 kmph, construction work, including laying casts, has to be stopped, due to the risk of machinery, like tower cranes, swaying," the official explained. A running train, whose speed limit would be restricted to 30 kmph, can sustain a wind speed of up to 90 kmph, added the official.

The bridge is supported by a single pylon soaring 1,086 feet from the Anji Khad riverbed in Reasi district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

After the bridge is completed, it will pave the way for a single broad-gauge track for trains connecting Jammu to Baramulla, via Srinagar, along a 326-km railway line.

The project was commissioned by the Northern Railways and is being executed by Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd. (KRCL) and Hindustan Construction Company. "Konkan Railway has prior experience of executing the largest railway project of the century in Asia. It cut through ghat sections and built 96 tunnels while laying a 756-km railway line," said a senior KRCL official.

However, engineers at the bridge site said that the execution of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project, pegged at over ₹37,000 crore, is more challenging due to persistent climatic issues and the treacherous nature of the difficult Himalayan terrain. Two months ago, a worker died after sustaining multiple injuries while conducting a slope stability survey on site, officials said.

'No approach roads'

Out of the total length of 326 km, work has been completed on 215 km, including the Jammu-Udhampur-Katra stretch (79 km) on the Jammu side and the Banihal-Qazigund-Baramulla stretch (136 km) in the Kashmir Valley. The work on the intervening Katra-Banihal section of nearly 111 km is currently in progress. "It is the most difficult section of the project, what with construction of 27 tunnels on a stretch of 97 km and 37 bridges in a 7-km section. Nearly 87% of the work is that of tunnelling," an official said.

The idea was first conceived in 2002 during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure as Prime Minister, and was declared a "national project".

"It was then realised during the survey of the stretch that there were no approach roads to start construction of the railway tunnel. Nearly 205 km of approach roads were paved between 2008 and 2016," explained the official quoted above.

The construction was then mired in a maze of litigation that questioned the alignment of the proposed bridge. In 2016, the work finally picked up pace, after all court cases were disposed of.

The nearest border area is Suchetgarh, about 92 km from the bridge construction site, making it a politically sensitive project. Officials told *The Hindu* that after 2016, construction work was delayed for a number of reasons, including the Pulwama attack and the onset of COVID-19.

MOSCOW

Russia will station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, says Putin

AP

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans on Saturday to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. He said it was in response to U.K. decision to provide Ukraine with armour-piercing rounds containing depleted uranium. He said construction of storage facilities in Belarus would be completed by July 1. AP

BEIRUT

Death toll reaches 19 in U.S. strikes on Iran-linked groups in Syria

AFP

The death toll from retaliatory U.S. strikes on Iran-linked groups in Syria following a deadly drone attack has risen to 19, a war monitor said on Saturday, as Washington insisted it is not seeking conflict with Tehran. Washington carried out the strikes after the Pentagon said a U.S. contractor died by a drone "of Iranian origin". AFP

VATICAN CITY

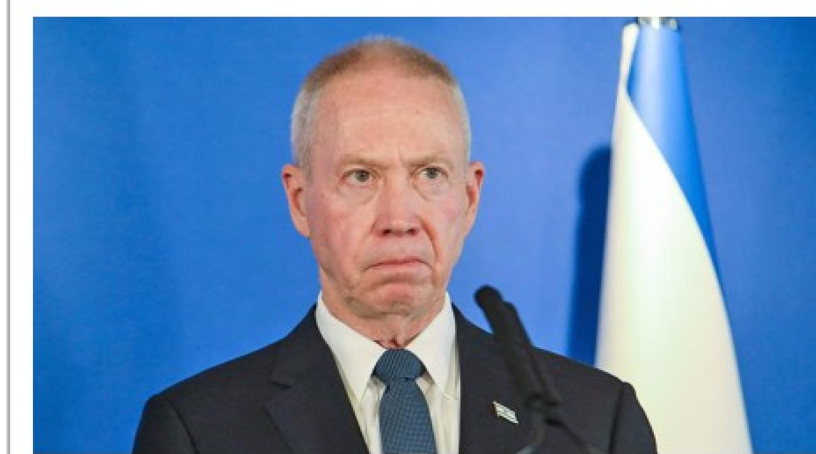
Pope expands sex abuse law, reaffirms adults can be victims

REUTERS

Pope Francis on Saturday updated a 2019 church law aimed at holding senior churchmen accountable for covering up cases of sex abuse, expanding it to cover lay Catholic leaders and reaffirming that vulnerable adults can also be victims of abuse when they are unable to consent. AP

JERUSALEM

Israeli Defence Minister Gallant calls for halt to judicial overhaul



AFP

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant called on Saturday for an immediate and temporary halt to the far-right government's plan to overhaul the judiciary, the first public dissent from within Prime Minister Benjamin's coalition. He said he is worried that the overhaul plans pose a threat to the country's security. AP

Britain, nine partners train Ukraine military recruits

Operation Interflex is a part of the U.K.'s commitment of £2.3 billion for military aid and support to Ukraine; the five-week course is being undertaken at four locations across the country

Dinakar Peri
LONDON

Before the war in Ukraine, Igor, 27, from Odesa, used to make handmade leather products, while Oleksiy, 34, from Mykolaiv, owned a car service station. Today, they are among almost 2,000 Ukraine military recruits undergoing five weeks of basic training in the U.K. under an initiative called Operation Interflex. The course, by the U.K. and nine other partner countries, began on June 27, 2022, and trains recruits from Ukraine's military.

The other nations involved in the initiative are Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, and the Netherlands. Training is on at four locations in the U.K.– Yorkshire, Kent, Wiltshire, and Northumberland.

Operation Interflex is a part of the U.K.'s commitment of £2.3 billion for the provision of military aid and support to Ukraine. On August 11, 2022, the U.K. and other key allies agreed at the Copenhagen Conference to expand long-term military support for Ukraine in its defence against Russia.

Operation Interflex aims to teach weapon handling, range activity, marksmanship, fieldcraft basics, field tactics, battle casualty drills, counter explosives, the laws of armed conflict, first aid, and cyber security awareness. "Our focus is on teaching the abilities to shoot, move, communicate, medicate, and the ability to defend their homeland," said Major Jürgen Miranda, who is heading the Canadian-U.K. training wing.

Defending homeland: Ukraine military recruits undergoing urban warfare and room intervention training in the U.K. DINAKAR PERI

'Learning to defend'

After the war began, Mr. Oleksiy said he worked for a while as a volunteer, repairing cars and helping with spare parts. "Now I am learning to defend Ukraine on a training ground in Britain. We are trained by professional military personnel from Canada, who teach us everything we will need in the future to protect Ukraine," he said.

Mr. Igor, who has an 86-year-old grandmother at home, was recruited a month ago. "I always wanted to join the Army but due to a physical injury in my leg I couldn't," he said. He finally got his turn after several requests, with his injury now treated.

"Our training is based on request from the Ukrainians to maximise the number of people that come for basic training," Maj. Trucker Middleton, commanding officer of the U.K. training team, said. "In the past, we have trained just over 10,000 recruits and that number is expected to increase along with other training that goes on across Europe to support our Ukrainian allies." The training is being ramped up and by year-end, around 20,000 recruits are expected to be trained.

Further, Maj. Middleton noted that they are training people with very little military experience, so irrespective of their age, they are considered recruits. "What we are providing them is basic infantry-based military training to give them the key skills and experiences to operate once they go back to Ukraine," he added.

Each trainee is also given equipment for use once they return. Around 1,95,000 items have been donated to date, U.K. officials said. These include personal protective equipment, including helmets; body armour; eye, ear, and pelvic protectors; individual first-aid kits; field uniforms and boots; cold and wet weather clothing; bergens; day sacks; and webbing and additional equipment required for field conditions including ponchos, sleeping bags, and entrenching tools, officials explained.

This training is in addition to the high-end military platforms and systems given to Ukraine and the training imparted to operate them, according to U.K. military officials.

After the United States, the U.K. too has supplied a large inventory of high-tech military equipment. This includes a squadron of 14 Challenger 2 tanks, AS90 and 28 M109 155mm self-propelled guns, hundreds of armoured and protected vehicles, more than 10,000 anti-tank missiles (including NLAW, Javelin, Brimstone, and other anti-tank weapons) and multiple launch rocket systems.

(The writer was in the U.K. on an invitation from the British Ministry of Defence)

Pakistan court sentences man to death for blasphemy

Agence France-Presse
PESHAWAR

An anti-terrorism court in northwest Pakistan has convicted and sentenced a Muslim man to death after he was accused of posting blasphemous content in a WhatsApp group.

Blasphemy is a hugely sensitive issue in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where even unproven allegations can stir mobs and violence.

Syed Muhammad Zeeshan was convicted under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act and Anti-Terrorist Act by the court in Peshawar on Friday.

Zeeshan, who is a resident of the northwest city of Mardan, was also fined 1.2 million rupees and handed a total of 23 years imprisonment. He has the right to appeal.

Trump to stage rally at site of deadly anti-govt. siege

Agence France-Presse
WACO

Donald Trump stages his first presidential campaign rally on Saturday at the site of a deadly 1993 stand-off between an anti-government cult and federal agents as he rails against multiple criminal probes threatening his bid for the White House.

Waco, Texas – which is marking the 30th anniversary of the siege – has become a touchstone for far-right activists glorying in its history of resistance against perceived government overreach.

The rally comes amid a torrent of increasingly bellicose statements by Mr. Trump claiming a "witch hunt" by prosecutors he refers to as "human scum" who are pursuing cases against him in New York, Washington and Atlanta.

Donald Trump

The Republican leader is expected to address at least 15,000 supporters as he braces for possible charges over a hush money payout.

'Blaring air horn'

The 76-year-old – who was impeached for inciting an insurrection – called last weekend for protests against Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, as the former President claimed falsely that he was about to be arrested. Some of those arriving in Waco came from other states, eager to see Mr. Trump returned to the Oval Office, with many wearing MAGA (Make America Great Again) caps or waving flags touting his campaign.

The Houston Chronicle published an op-ed Thursday accusing Trump of hosting his rally during the 30th anniversary as a "blaring air horn" for the extremists among his followers.

The Trump campaign didn't immediately respond to the request for the rationale behind choosing Waco at such a sensitive time. But his spokesman was quoted by U.S. media pointing to the ease of access afforded by Waco's central location.

Tornadoes rip through Mississippi, killing 23, injuring dozens overnight

Associated Press
ROLLING FORK

Powerful tornadoes that ripped through Mississippi – destroying buildings and obliterating at least one town – killed almost two dozen people, officials said on Saturday. They warned that the casualty toll could go higher.

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency said in a Twitter post that search and rescue teams from local and state agencies were deployed to help victims impacted by the tornadoes. The agency confirmed early on Saturday that 23 people had died, four were missing and dozens were injured.

A few minutes later, the agency tweeted: "Unfortunately, these numbers are expected to change."

The National Weather Service confirmed a tornado caused damage about 96 kilometres northeast of Jackson, Mississippi. The rural towns of Silver City and Rolling Fork reported destruction as the tornado swept northeast at 113 kph without weakening, racing towards Alabama through towns including Winona and Amory into the night.

Washed out: Law-enforcement officers climbing through debris to look for survivors at a diner in Rolling Fork on Saturday. AP

Rolling Fork Mayor Eldridge Walker told *CNN* that his town was essentially wiped out.

Rolling Fork and the surrounding area has wide expanses of cotton, corn and soybean fields and catfish farming ponds. More than a half-dozen shelters were opened in the state by emergency officials.

"This was a supercell, the nasty type of storms that brew the deadliest tornado and most damaging hail in the U.S.," said University of Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Walker Ashley.

Paul, hero of *Hotel Rwanda*, out of prison

Agence France-Presse
KIGALI

Fiercely outspoken Rwandan government critic Paul Rusesabagina, whose efforts to save people during the 1994 genocide inspired the Hollywood film *Hotel Rwanda*, has been freed from prison after more than 900 days behind bars.

Mr. Rusesabagina was released late on Friday away from the media glare and will return to the United States after the Kigali government commuted his 25-year sentence on terrorism charges.

His detention had thrown a spotlight on Rwanda's record of crushing political dissent and free speech under President Paul Kagame.

Mr. Rusesabagina was convicted in September 2021 of backing an armed rebel group after a trial that his supporters denounced as a sham.

G20

आर्मर्ड व्हीकल्स निगम लिमिटेड
भारत सरकार का उद्यम
रक्षा मंत्रालय

अवनि AVANI

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Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

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Chennai
Dated: 26.03.2023

New technique can say where spent nuclear fuel came from

Vasudevan Mukunth

Scientists in China have developed a technique to reliably identify whether some nuclear fuel originated in one of two common kinds of nuclear reactors, a difficult task in nuclear forensics, using experimental data and machine-learning (ML).

Their work was published in *Physical Review Applied* on March 9.

Nuclear fuel is a highly regulated material because of its destructive potential. Countries maintain detailed inventories to safeguard it.

Nuclear forensics use analytical methods to identify the origins of nuclear materials and whether they were used for military applications.

Spent fuel from boiling water reactors (BWRs) is hard to differentiate from that from pressurised water reactors (PWRs) because both "use water as moderator and have similar thermal neutron spectra, so they are quite similar in neutron reaction mechanism," Shengli Chen, assistant professor at the Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangdong, and a co-author of the study, told *The Hindu* by email.

Experimental data

The group used experimental data instead of simulations, whose accuracy is unknown.

The reactor type, the fuel's exposure time inside the reactor, and the extent of the fuel's enrichment can uniquely identify spent nuclear fuel.

Using a database that contains the composition of different isotopes in spent fuel from reactors over 50 years, the researchers developed equations that related these quantities to each other.

If one quantity can be determined through other measurements such as gamma-ray emissions from the spent fuel, the values of the other two quantities can be calculated.

They also trained data from the database to develop three ML models to distinguish fuel from BWRs from that from PWRs.

In BWRs, the fuel rods are submerged in water. When the fuel fissions, the water boils and the steam drives a turbine. In PWRs, the fuel rods aren't exposed to the water; only the heat is exchanged.

The group's ML models correctly identified 91% of the fuel from BWRs, and 95% the of fuel from PWRs.

"There was no explicit information about the accuracy of discriminating between PWRs and BWRs in older papers," said Dr. Chen.

"Previous works, based on simulation data," could differentiate between reactors, whereas "our work, based on experimental data, explicitly concludes which reactor type has been used to irradiate the sample," added Dr. Chen.

Inadequate sleep increases the risk of fatty liver disease

With every one-hour decrease in sleep time from the recommended seven-eight hours, the risk of fat deposition in the liver increased by 24%

Cyriac Abby Philips

In 2018, anatomists at the Toho University Graduate School of Medicine, Tokyo, Japan, performed a sleep deprivation experiment on lab mice. Mice usually sleep for 12 hours a day. In this experiment, researchers induced sleep deprivation using the 'gentle handling method' during sleep hours so that the mice could sleep only for six hours daily.

They discovered that liver fat content in sleep-deprived mice increased without total weight gain compared to another group of mice who were allowed to sleep normally. The liver cells were stressed, and the activity of certain genes that escalate insulin resistance and fat content within liver cells also increased with sleep deprivation.

Sleep deprivation is associated with liver disease

Sleeping only for a few hours each night is not healthy

Essential: Seven hours at night is the minimum required sleep duration

- The brain does not rest during sleep, but is engaged in various activities necessary to improve well-being, especially of the liver
- **Incidence of fatty liver disease among 10,000 people with sleep disorders at one-year follow-up was 14; control group recorded only six cases**
- **Inadequate sleep duration is strongly associated with an elevated risk of developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease**
- **Napping for more than one hour during the day too was strongly associated with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease development**
- Liver fat content in sleep-deprived mice increased without total weight gain compared to the control group
- **The risk of fatty liver disease reduced significantly in people who caught up on sleep debt during weekends**

Experiment on rats

Three years later, a group of Chinese researchers at the Xinjiang Medical University went one step ahead. In this experiment, rats were severely sleep-deprived, turning into insomniacs.

Liver enzymes, blood, and liver fat increased substantially. None of these changes were notable among rats who were allowed to sleep without distractions.

They also found the reason for increased liver fat in insomniac mice – the sympathetic nerves that supplied the liver, best known for their role in responding to stress and danger, were hyperactive. When insomnia was treated with a sleeping pill in these stressed rats, the liver fat was reduced with adequate sleep.

There are lessons here, of mice and men. Sleep is an underrated activity among humans. Sometimes, the intentional and forced lack of sleep 'to increase productivity' is advertised by men in power to showcase their self-proclaimed metahuman nature.

During an interview in 2011, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he had become a workaholic and hardly slept for 3.5 hours in a day, and that yoga and *pranayama* routine kept him energised and awake.

But medical science has a different story to tell. A study of nearly 55,500 people from Europe showed that those who slept 7-8.5 hours daily had higher life expectancy than those who slept less than seven hours. In those between ages 50 and 75 without sleep disturbances, the expectation of living longer without chronic disease development was significantly higher.

And yoga interventions improved overall sleep quality, efficiency, latency, and duration, contrary to all claims.

Healthy sleep

Sleep is a vital function of human life and accounts for up to one-third of the lifespan. Contrary to normal belief, during sleep, the brain is not 'resting' but is engaged in various activities necessary to improve well-being, increase life, and especially impact the liver.

The minimum required duration for 'healthy' sleep is seven hours.

When 10,000 persons with sleep disorders were followed up for one year, incident fatty liver disease was noted in 14, while in those without sleep disorders, it was only six. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease association was significantly higher among persons with shorter sleep duration (less than six hours per night) and excessive daytime sleepiness.

A high-quality study showed that inadequate sleep duration was strongly associated with an elevated risk of developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and adequate sleep helped prevent it. With every one-hour decrease in sleep time from the recommended seven-eight hours, the risk of fat deposition in the liver increased by 24% compared with those who slept adequately.

However, when people who lost sleep during the weekdays caught up on the debt during weekends (known as weekend catch-up sleep), the development of fatty liver disease reduced significantly. Compared with non-nappers, long daytime nappers (more than 60 minutes) had a higher risk of developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Identification

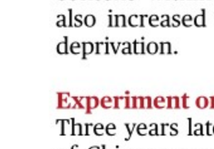
Correlation may not be causation, but with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, which is associated with other conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, increased waist-hip ratio, low functioning thyroid, and high blood cholesterol, studying and identifying independent associations make realistic sense.

In people who sleep less than six hours at night, have a persistently poor sleep quality, or nap more than one hour during the day, independent of other disease conditions, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease development was a strong association.

The next time someone brags that sacrificing time and quality of sleep is an achievement associated with success, know that success comes with fatty liver disease. And it is not worth it.

(Cyriac Abby Philips is a senior consultant and physician-scientist at the Liver Institute, Rajagiri Hospital, Kochi)

Mirror, mirror, is that me?



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. Balasubramanian

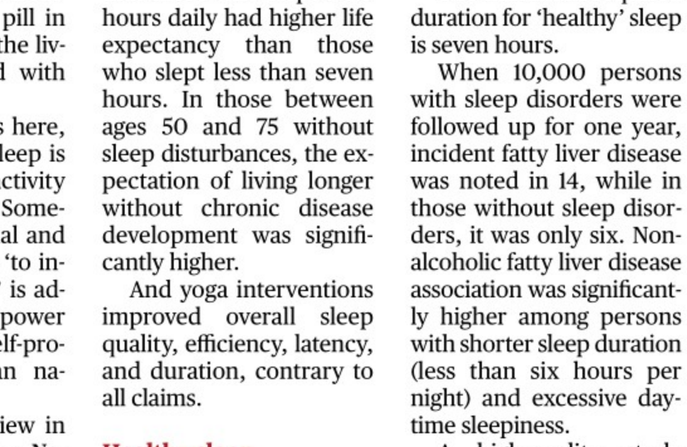
Monkeys, when first shown a mirror, respond to the 'intruder' with hostility – teeth are bared, and war-like poses adopted. We, humans, recognise our own reflections in a mirror as 'me'. However, this ability is not a uniquely human trait. The "Mirror test" is also passed by chimpanzees, dolphins, elephants, some birds and even fish.

The test for self-recognition is simple enough. A prominent mark (for example, a large red dot) is secretively made on the face of the subject, in a place where it is not visible to the subject. When placed on an infant or a small child, a red mark on the forehead certainly draws the attention of the child. Until they are about 18-months old, children reach out to try and touch that strange mark in the mirror. From around 18 months of age, children react to the reflection in a mirror by trying to touch the mark on their own foreheads. They seem to ask themselves, "How did this get to my face?"

The older child's ability is surely a sign of self-recognition. But is it also a sign of self-awareness? After all, even grown-up humans have wide-ranging reactions to mirrors. Some cannot resist stopping, others do not seem to pay much attention to their reflections.

Self-recognition

New findings about mirror self-recognition have come from a Japanese laboratory, studying the bluestreak cleaner wrasse fish, which is known to show signs of self-recognition (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*). This small fish has a mutualistic relationship with larger fish in tropical oceans. It feeds on parasites attached to their bodies. The cleaner fish waits at chosen places, and the parasite-ridden fish present themselves for cleaning. They even adopt strange body postures so that the cleaner fish can get to the parasites. The scene resembles a barber's shop, where men hold their chins, or their arms up for the barber to shave.



Quite common: Bluestreak cleaner wrasse fish is known to show signs of self-recognition. GETTY IMAGES

The experiments with cleaner fish were performed in aquariums, one fish at a time. A mirror is first placed in the water, or a photograph of the fish is shown on a screen. On the first few occasions, the image is attacked. But over time, self-recognition is attained, and this fish passes the mirror-test. It is aggressive only towards images of strangers. It even recognises bright marks painted on its body, and tries to rub them off on any nearby surface.

When shown a manipulated image, where the body of a stranger now carries the face of the fish, the fish does not show aggressive behaviour. But a photoshopped image with the face of a stranger on the fish's body attracts hostility. The cleaner fish seems to have a memory of its face.

For children, full recognition of the reflection in mirror as 'me' occurs by the age of 18 months

Self-awareness?

Returning to human children, we have seen that self-recognition is learnt as the child grows. Full recognition of the reflection in the mirror as 'me' occurs by the age of 18 months. This is also the age at which children begin to talk about themselves, and recall events from memory (for example, "I ate it"). Can this be called self-awareness?

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling. sushilchandani@gmail.com)

SNAPSHOTS

Numerical abilities hardwired in newly hatched zebrafish

Zebrafish larvae can recognise difference between numbers of black bars within 96 hours of hatching (*Communications Biology*). The findings suggest that numerical abilities may be hardwired in zebrafish. Earlier work has demonstrated numerical abilities in new-born humans and newly hatched chickens – species whose brains are developed. Till now, there has been little understanding of numerical abilities in other species that are born at a larval or foetal stage, with underdeveloped brains.

Sorghum's alkaline tolerance can improve crop yields

As the world's soils continue to be impacted by salt, researchers have identified a protein that plays a crucial role in helping plants like sorghum grow in alkaline, salty soils (*Science*). The findings could inform the design of crops better suited to grow in underutilised sodic lands. Researchers performed a genome-wide association study of plant growth in alkaline conditions using sorghum and identified Alkaline Tolerance 1 (AT1) – a major locus specially related to the plant's sensitivity to alkaline, sodic soils.

Oxytocin plays a key role in basic empathy in zebrafish

Oxytocin plays an essential role in the spread of fear in zebrafish (*Science*), the results of which suggest a deeply conserved role for the hormone in emotional contagion – the basal form of empathy – among vertebrates like fish. Empathy, the capacity to recognise and respond to the emotional state of another individual, is a hallmark of highly social mammals. However, research suggests that the capacity for empathy may be more widespread across vertebrates.

Question Corner

Distant planets

Can distant planets harbour life?

A new study (*The Astrophysical Journal*) describes how extraterrestrial life has the potential to exist on distant exoplanets inside a special area called the 'terminator zone', which is a ring on planets that have one side that always faces its star and the other side that is always dark.

Such planets are common because they exist around stars that make up about 70% of the stars seen in the night sky, so-called M-dwarf stars, says a release. The terminator is the dividing line between the day and night sides of the planet. On the dark sides of terminator planets, perpetual night would yield plummeting temperatures that could cause any water to be frozen into ice. The side of the planet always facing its star could be too hot for water to remain in the open for long.

Researchers modelled the climate of terminator planets using software used to model earth's climate. It is believed to be the first time astronomers have been able to show that such planets can sustain habitable climates confined to this terminator region, says the release.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Should India worry about rising cases?

Why did the Prime Minister convene a meeting of the COVID-19 taskforce? What is the directive from the Centre?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi this week convened a high-level meeting of the COVID-19 taskforce. This is the first time this year that such a meeting has been convened, with the last such meet held on December 22, 2022.

Why was the meeting necessary?

By all metrics, there has been a rise in COVID-19 cases over several weeks. As of March 23, India officially reported 1,300 new coronavirus cases over a 24-hour period bringing the overall tally of active cases to 7,605. In the previous weeks too, an average of 800 cases have been reported weekly. The death toll climbed to 5,30,813 with five deaths, one each reported in Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala, as of March 22. The number of daily deaths has been in the single digit in the past few weeks. Globally, about 1 lakh cases are being reported every day.

The daily positivity rate, or the percentage of tests administered by States every day that confirms the presence of the virus, was recorded at 1.46% while the weekly positivity rate was pegged at 1.08%.

States have been advised to focus on the five-fold strategy of test, track, treat, vaccinate and COVID-appropriate behaviour

These are still numbers well within the comfort margins of health authorities. During the pandemic, a test positivity rate below 5% was considered to be a sign of the disease being within manageable limits. However, the fact that there has been a rise in number prompted top health officials, as well as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to take stock of the situation.

What was the outcome of the meeting?

Mr. Modi's headline remark was that the COVID-19 pandemic "is far from over", and he stressed the need to monitor the status of the disease across the country on a regular basis. He directed officials to increase whole genome sequencing of COVID positive samples, using the designated INSACOG (Indian SARS CoV-2 Genomics Consortium) laboratories, to aid with the tracking of new and emerging variants and facilitate a timely response. The consortium is a network of labs across the country that analyses samples from different regions and sounds an alert if a spike in cases is linked to certain mutations of the coronavirus that are known to increase virus transmissibility.

He said that "COVID-appropriate behaviour" should be enforced in hospitals, and also among senior citizens and those with co-morbidities when visiting crowded areas. He directed officials to follow up with States to ensure effective monitoring of all cases of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and severe acute respiratory Illnesses (SARI), with testing for influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and adenovirus.

He emphasised the need to ensure the availability of the required drugs and logistics for influenza and COVID-19 cases across health facilities, along with the availability of sufficient beds and health human resources. The States were advised to continue focusing on the five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccinate and COVID-appropriate behaviour, enhance lab surveillance and testing of all SARI cases. "Mock drills should be conducted regularly to ensure that our hospitals are ready," Mr. Modi said.

What is behind the surge in cases?

There is an increase in the number of seasonal influenza H3N2 cases and tests on patients often reveal an uptick in COVID-19 cases. A rapidly proliferating lineage of the Omicron virus called XBB.1.16 is believed to be behind the recent spike in COVID-19 cases. Scientists from the INSACOG consortium report that though systematic genomic surveillance in India is limited, XBB.1.16 has been found in nearly a third of all the sequenced genomes in March 2023. Its proportion has been seen to be increasing in the past few weeks, to become the major lineage in several States such as Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Delhi, Puducherry, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Odisha. These States report higher cases also because they have better surveillance systems.

Based on preliminary data, there is no evidence, so far, to suggest that infections with the XBB.1.16 lineage differ in clinical severity from those caused by other Omicron lineages, although the higher growth advantage and its ability to better thwart the immune system could lead to a higher risk of reinfection with XBB.1.16 compared to other Omicron lineages.

Is India testing enough?

Nearly 92 crore tests for detection of COVID-19 have been conducted so far. The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 4.4 crore, while the case fatality rate was 1.19%. According to the Health Ministry, about 220 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the country thus far.

Why did India reject J&J's patent on TB drug?

How will it help the treatment of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis? What are the costs and production implications? How many people suffer from multi-drug-resistant TB? What is India's target year to eliminate TB?

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

On March 23, the Indian Patent Office rejected an application by pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson (J&J) to extend its patent on the drug bedaquiline beyond July 2023. Bedaquiline is a drug in tablet form used to treat drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB). This opens the door for drug manufacturers to produce generic versions of bedaquiline, which are expected to be more affordable and to contribute to India's goal of eliminating TB by 2025.

What is drug-resistant TB?

As of 2017, India accounted for around one-fourth of the world's burden of multi-drug-resistant (MDR) TB and of extensively-drug-resistant (XDR) TB.

MDR TB resists treatment by at least two frontline drugs in TB treatment, isoniazid and rifampicin.

The patent rejection is expected to lower the cost of bedaquiline by up to 80%

XDR TB resists these two drugs as well as fluoroquinolones and any second-line injectable drug. XDR TB is rarer than MDR TB – there were 1,24,000 cases of the latter in India (2021) versus 2,650 cases of the former (2017).

TB incidence in India has been on the decline, but MDR TB and XDR TB endanger initiatives to locally eradicate the disease. In the first two years of the pandemic, there were reports that TB treatment was hit by disrupted supply chains, availability of healthcare workers for non-pandemic work, and access to drug-distribution centres.

A peer-reviewed 2020 study found that the incidence of MDR TB was "strongly correlated with treatment failure and spread through contact, and not to treatment compliance".

How is drug-resistant TB treated?

TB is an infection of the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis in the lungs, but often in other organs as well. It can be treated by strictly adhering to the doses and frequencies of drugs prescribed by a physician. Deviations from this schedule can lead the bacteria to become drug-resistant. Yet they happen because the drugs often have side effects that diminish the quality of life and/or because patients haven't been afforded access to the requisite drugs on time.

Drug-resistant TB is harder to treat. One important option for those diagnosed with pulmonary MDR TB is bedaquiline. In 2018, the World Health Organization replaced two injectable drugs for MDR TB with an oral regimen that included bedaquiline.

At this time, bedaquiline hadn't completed phase III trials. The recommendation was based on smaller studies, outcomes in TB elimination programmes worldwide, the difficulty of treating MDR TB, and close monitoring of patients receiving the drug.

How effective is bedaquiline?

Typically, bedaquiline needs to be taken for six months: at a higher dose in the first two weeks followed by a lower dosage for 22 weeks. This period is shorter than other treatment routines for pulmonary MDR TB, which can last 9-24 months. One phase II clinical trial observed that culture conversion (turning a patient's sputum culture from positive to negative) "at 24 weeks was durable and associated with a high likelihood of response at 120 weeks", due to bedaquiline.

Unlike second-line treatment options that are injected and can have severe side effects, like hearing loss, bedaquiline is available as tablets and is less harmful, although it has potential side effects of its own.

Studies until 2018 found that it could be toxic to the heart and the liver. This is part of why it is recommended only as a treatment of last resort.

India's Health Ministry has guidelines for bedaquiline use as part of the Programmatic Management of MDR TB under the National TB Elimination Programme.

The WHO's decision revitalised a debate about the ethics of making a much-needed but insufficiently tested drug available quickly versus lowering the safety threshold for pharmaceutical companies producing drugs for desperate patients.

Why was the patent application rejected?

J&J's patent application was for a fumarate salt of a compound to produce bedaquiline tablets. Two groups opposed the patent: 1) Network of Maharashtra people living with HIV and 2) Nandita Venkatesan and Phumeza Tisile, both TB survivors, supported by Médecins Sans Frontières.

Both groups argued that J&J's method to produce a "solid pharmaceutical composition" of bedaquiline is "obvious, known in the art" and doesn't require an "inventive step". According to the Indian Patent Act 1970 Section 2(1)(ja), an 'inventive step' is an invention that is "not obvious to a person skilled in the art".

The latter also contended that the current application drew significantly from a previous patent, WO 2004/011436, which discussed a similar compound on which bedaquiline is based and whose priority date (2002) well preceded the new application.

The Patent Office rejected the application on these and other grounds, including Sections 3d and 3e of the Act. These pertain to "mere discovery of a new form of a known substance which does not result in the enhancement of the known efficacy of that substance" and "a substance obtained by a mere admixture resulting only in the aggregation of the properties of the components thereof", respectively, which are not patentable.

Why is the rejection notable?

India has the largest population of people living with drug-resistant TB. J&J's patent on bedaquiline meant the drug cost $400 (revised to $340 in 2020) per person, plus the cost of other drugs. The rejection is expected to lower the cost of bedaquiline by up to 80%.

So far, the Indian government has directly procured the drug and distributed it through State-level TB programmes. After July 2023, manufacturers of generic drugs such as Lupin will be able to produce generic versions of bedaquiline.

The argument based on WO 2004/011436 is also relevant to 'evergreening' – a strategy whereby a patent-owner continuously extends their rights and/or applies multiple patents for the same entity. Indian law disallows this.

End of monopoly

The long struggle to end Johnson & Johnson's patent on bedaquiline

- Johnson & Johnson filed a patent application with the Mumbai Patent Office in June 2009
- The Office issued the First Examination Report in March 2012
- 'Network of Maharashtra people living with HIV' filed an opposition in March 2013
- The 'Network' filed its pre-grant opposition in September 2013
- Nandita Venkatesan and Phumeza Tisile filed another opposition in February 2019
- They filed their pre-grant opposition in May 2022
- After some delays, the Patent Office organised the first hearing in November 2022
- Three subsequent hearings took place on November 24, November 30, and January 17, 2023
- After consideration, the Patent Office rejected J&J's application for extension on March 23, 2023

Towards equal access: A doctor examines a tuberculosis patient in Guwahati in 2018. AP

Will mega textile parks help boost the sector?

Where are mega parks coming up in the first phase under the PM MITRA scheme? What has been the reaction to the announcement from MSMEs which dominate the textiles and apparel industry? How is the new initiative different from earlier textile park schemes?

M. Soundariya Preetha

The story so far:

On March 17, the government announced that seven mega textile parks under the ₹4,445-crore PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel (PM MITRA) scheme will be set up in the first phase. The notification for large-scale textile parks under PM MITRA had been given in October 2021. The scheme which seeks to streamline the textile value chain into one ecosystem, taking in spinning, weaving and dyeing to printing and garment manufacturing, is expected to generate investments worth ₹70,000 crore. It would also lead to the creation of 20 lakh jobs, according to Commerce & Industry and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal.

What is expected in the first phase?

Under the first phase of the PM MITRA scheme, large textile parks, spread across at least 1,000 acres, will come up in seven States –Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh – housing the entire textile value chain, from fibre to fabric to garments. The parks will have plug-and-play manufacturing facilities and all the common amenities required.

India must take a cue from countries such as Turkey where integrated textile parks are highly efficient

The Central government's budget outlay for the scheme, which is ₹4,445 crore, is to be spent till 2027-28. Special purpose vehicles, with a 51% equity shareholding of the State government and 49% of the Centre, will be formed for each park. The State governments will provide the land, be part of the SPV, and give the required clearances. The Central government will disburse Development Capital Fund of ₹500 crore in two tranches for each of the seven facilities. This is for the creation of core and support infrastructure. It will also give a Competitive Incentive Support of ₹300 crore per park to be provided to the manufacturing units.

Is it different from previous textile schemes?

The textile and apparel sector has benefited from different programmes, such as the Apparel Park Scheme announced in 2002 and the Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks launched in 2005, which supported development of common infrastructure. The PM MITRA scheme is envisaged to be a unique initiative and the differentiating factors are the emphasis on large-scale production and provision of plug-and-play manufacturing centres. The scheme is to be implemented jointly by the Central and State governments. The parks, which will be open for foreign direct investments, will be located in States that have inherent strengths in the textile sector. Each park will have effluent treatment plants, accommodation for workers, skill training centres and warehouses too. It is designed to attract investment from companies that are looking to scale up, and require integrated manufacturing facilities in one location.

What will be the impact on MSMEs?

The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector is said to control almost 80% of the textiles and apparels currently made in India. Further, the Indian textile and clothing units are more cotton-based. The industry has mixed views on the immediate impact of the huge investments that are expected to come into the parks in existing units.

However, with mounting challenges such as the global geopolitical situation, and overseas buyers exploring China as well as other sourcing options, the past two years have seen notable shifts in supply chains. Orders are transitioning to suppliers who are highly price competitive and have sustainable production processes. Even those who cater to low-volume orders are going in for value addition for better price realisation. Thus, manufacturers with vertically integrated facilities are at an advantage compared to smaller, standalone players. The MSME exporters are also realising that there is a need for integrated, larger facilities and these factors are expected to drive the industry's investment plans.

Does the industry expect a boost in exports?

Indian textile and clothing exports have stagnated at around the $40-billion mark over the past four years, and stood at $44 billion last year; the aim is to achieve $100 billion in exports and target a domestic business of $250 billion by 2030. The PM MITRA parks aim to augment the export potential of the sector. Cotton-based products make up approximately 65% of the total textile and apparel exports. Indian exports, which cover a gamut of products, are mainly known for yarn, bedsheets and towels, T-shirts and denim fabric. Expanding the fibre and product line will give India a larger share in the global market, from the current 5%. In order to make a giant leap in exports and domestic sales, the industry has to also be price competitive right from the raw material stage and gear up to meet the sustainability and traceability demands of international buyers. The State governments and developers should give thrust to the PM MITRA parks for sustainable and cost-effective solutions for pollution control and other issues that the value-adding segments of the textile chain face. India can take a cue from countries such as Turkey where integrated textile parks are highly efficient. Some of the MSME players who have the appetite to invest but are in need of resources are hoping the government will combine the Production Linked Incentive scheme II with PM MITRA, though guidelines issued in January last year say incentives under PM MITRA will be available only to those companies that have not availed of benefits from the PLI scheme. The Central and State governments have to encourage MSME units to invest in the PM MITRA parks and scale up, say insiders. Else, India faces the risk of missing out on the opportunity to become the prime destination for textile production and exports.

Set in stone: Tamil Nadu CM M. K. Stalin and Union Minister Piyush Goyal at the MoUs exchange for the first PM MITRA Park on March 22. RAGHUNATHAN S. R.

PROFILES

The cornered captain

Imran Khan

The former Pakistan PM accuses the government of plotting to kill him, promises to liberate the people 'from slavery' and urges his supporters to 'shed every drop' of their blood as he is fighting both his political rivals and the military establishment to take back power

Suhasini Haidar

Both in and out of power, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan (2018-22) has always exhibited a certain restless quality – a leader who can't wait for the next chapter in his story to unfold and is consistently pushing the buttons on an imaginary time machine, trying to fast forward to his ultimate destiny. Equally, Mr. Khan carries an air of grievance, of having been cheated of that destiny. Given that the former cricketing hero, who brought home Pakistan's only World Cup in 1992 and subsequently launched a fiery political career with a meteoric rise to power in 2018, has tasted success several times, it is often unclear just why Mr. Khan feels so cheated, and why much of his speeches at the massive rallies he has addressed over the past year are filled with bitterness and self-righteous anger.

They are also marked with a sense of drama, much of it engineered by the man himself, and the past week has been no different – as his party workers clashed with the police in Islamabad outside the Judicial complex where Mr. Khan was due to appear in the 'Toshakhana case', where he is accused of illegally acquiring watches and expensive jewellery he received during his tenure as Prime Minister.

"We are not free, we are slaves. We may have Pakistanis at the top of the government, but we are serfs," he thundered during a recent "address to the nation", one of several that he puts out on YouTube, accusing the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of plotting to kill him, of arresting hundreds of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) workers and muzzling the opposition.

As if on cue, the electricity goes out during the recording, and Mr. Khan is heard expostulating, and impatiently asking his aides to turn on the torch on their cellphones so that he can complete his speech. "Be prepared to give every drop of your blood, be unafraid," he tells supporters, calling them to a "Haqeeqi Azaadi" (Real Independence) rally, his first this year being held at the Minar-E-Pakistan monument on Saturday night.

The sense of history is not lost on his supporters, as March 25 marks the day in 1992 that Mr. Khan's "Cornered Tigers", as the Pakistan cricket team was called, won the World Cup. "Today, PTI has been cornered by the State with unprecedented unleashing of fascism against its leadership & workers, but we will win because under Imran Khan's leadership we are fighting for freedom & Rule of Law," tweeted PTI leader Shireen Mazari ahead of the rally.

Second innings

Then 40 years old, Mr. Khan could have probably retired after the World Cup and lived a life of eternal adulation. Within four years, however, he launched his "second innings" in Pakistani politics, vowing to wrest power from the two powerful dynasties – the Bhuttos and the Sharifs, who have alternated in running the government for much of the past 35 years. His political path was nearly dead on arrival – in the 1997 election, his party won no seats, and in 2002, just one. He did not contest in 2008, in protest against military ruler Pervez Musharraf, but made a startling comeback in 2013, with 35 seats. In 2018, the PTI finally won power, with 149 of 342 seats, enough to form a comfortable majority. Mr. Khan's populist pitch, the personality cult he built and the use of social media were part of similar successes in democracies around the world – from the U.S. and the U.K. to Brazil and even India. Through the journey, Mr. Khan has always pitched himself as an underdog undertaking a lone battle, despite his obvious successes and popularity with his supporters.

"Imran Khan – the once and future Prime Minister of Pakistan is all things to all men and women," explains Fakir Syed Aijazuddin, columnist at the *Dawn* newspaper, "Adored by acolytes, wooed by women, a cricketing champion, married first to a Jewish heiress (Jemima Goldsmith Khan) and

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

now to a Pirni (spiritual figure Bushra Bibi) with unnatural powers, he defies conventional analysis."

Asked about the sense of grievance, Mr. Aijazuddin, author of several historical books, adds that Mr. Khan "is tempted by martyrdom, had he not loved power more", referring to the 12th century Archbishop Thomas Becket who fought with the British King and establishment, and is the subject of many theatrical works.

As Prime Minister, Mr. Khan was often seen breaking rules, and justifying his actions by showing the power of his popular support at massive rallies. The risk-taking and brinkmanship reached a crescendo last year, when Mr. Khan faced a no-confidence vote in Parliament.

Despite knowing he did not have the numbers, he stalled for time, ensuring the vote was delayed, and then dramatically resigned with all PTI MPs, saying he was the victim of an "international regime change conspiracy", a charge aimed at the U.S. and the Pakistani military Generals, whom he referred to as "Dirty Harrys".

There is some truth to Mr. Khan's allegation that he has been treated unfairly since then – as the Sharif government has slapped as many as 80 cases against him, his party workers have been targeted and arrested, his speeches and interviews have been banned from being aired on Pakistani television channels by the electronic media watchdog, which accuses him of "spreading hate speech through his provocative statements against state institutions and officers which is prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order and is likely to disturb public peace and tranquillity".

In addition, he has faced the full force of state forces, including an incident earlier this month, when a PTI activist allegedly died from injuries he received from the police during the protests outside his home. In an assassination attempt on him during a rally last November, Mr. Khan was shot in both legs.

Bowl fast

Still limping from the injuries as he walks, Mr. Khan is, however, oblivious to the charge that he is not the only leader in Pakistan that has faced attempts on his life, and that he himself stands accused of running an authoritarian government, where opponents had cases slapped against them, and journalists faced restrictions. He dismisses such claims. "My three-and-a-half years are considered the most liberal in Pakistan's history in terms of journalists, in terms of freedom of media and press. My three-and-a-half years were exemplary," he said in a recent interview to the *New Yorker*.

Imran Khan's focus now is entirely on bringing his party back to power and recapturing the Prime Ministerial post. As he launches an all-out campaign for elections to be announced at the earliest, his politics is likely to be more confrontational. Analysts say his tone against the Sharif government is likely to become more shrill and he will bring more of his supporters to the streets, in a manner harking back to his famous words to team-mate Wasim Akram during the two overs that decided Pakistan's World Cup win in 1992 – "Forget about the no-balls. Just bowl fast."

THE GIST

- Imran Khan's political path was nearly dead on arrival — in the 1997 election, his party won no seats, and in 2002, just one. He did not contest in 2008, in protest against Musharraf
- His party made a startling comeback in 2013, with 35 seats and in 2018, the PTI finally won power, with 149 of 342 seats
- Last year, amid a no-confidence vote, he resigned with all PTI MPs, saying he was the victim of an 'international regime change conspiracy'

Glitch in the reel

Shou Zi Chew

The Singaporean CEO of TikTok says his company has evolved into a global enterprise, but it continues to face concerns about privacy and data security

Saptaparno Ghosh

In December 2022, at a *New York Times* summit, journalist Andrew Ross Sorkin asked Shou Zi Chew, the CEO of TikTok, "For the older folks here, who should we be following on TikTok?" The response: "Oh (laughs), please follow me! I only have 10,000 followers on TikTok." The deal was indeed true.

Mr. Chew did not possess the same recall value as others in the social media story of the Silicon Valley. However, over the past year, the TikTok CEO has been seen recurrently saying he is a Singaporean and lives in the city. This appeared to be particularly tactical – an attempt to rest concerns as his company defends itself from allegations about the involvement of the Communist Party of China.

Recently, the platform, as any other tech-entity in dire straits would, tried to shore up public confidence and put forth a worthy defence. In the run-up to his testimony before the U.S. Congress on Thursday, Mr. Chew took to the platform informing that he would outline the steps taken for users' safety and "inspiring creativity and spreading joy". He opened by thanking the community for 150 million monthly active American users on the platform before moving to caution that a potential

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

ban would take the app away from them.

Road to Bytedance

The third-generation Singaporean attended the University College of London and then the Harvard Business School. During his military conscription, Mr. Chew served as an officer at the Singapore Armed Forces. Mr. Chew once said he is an "amateur theoretical physicist", who "hardly understands the mathematics behind the more complex theories" but finds it very interesting.

After graduating from business school, Mr. Chew joined prominent tech investor Yuri Milner's venture fund DST Global. For the next five years of his life, he earned a living by finding worthy Internet-related investments. It was during his tenure at DST Global that he oversaw the investment made in TikTok's parent company – Bytedance.

In 2015, Mr. Chew switched to smartphone manufacturer Xiaomi as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO). He joined Bytedance as its CFO in 2021. He was promoted as the CEO of TikTok in just five weeks, succeeding Kevin Mayer who had earlier exited the company within months of his joining.

Mr Chew has time and again emphasised the importance of privacy, safety and building trust. However, his company and its operations continue to face allegations of data breach.

Bytedance was founded by Chinese entrepreneur Yiming Zhang in 2012 and TikTok was launched in 2016. Mr. Chew has held that the company, though founded by Chinese entrepreneurs, has evolved into a global enterprise. Interestingly, a *New York Times* profile held that Mr. Chew's power in the organisation was limited. It said the app's growth and strategy are spearheaded by Bytedance executives who report to the company's office in Beijing, not to the CEO. The China-based parent company also owns the indigenous version of TikTok called 'Douyin'. Bytedance developed the underlying basic technology for both the apps. Furthermore, all employees of the app, including those in China, had access to U.S. citizen's data and could contribute in shaping algorithms. The Chinese government had also acquired a 1% stake in Bytedance's Beijing Douyin Information Services Ltd. Mr. Chew reasoned that it was necessary for obtaining news licence in China for their other applications.

The centrepiece of the CEO's defence has been "Project Texas" for which they have spent $1.5 billion and founded a special subsidiary, the TikTok U.S. Data Security Inc. The idea is to host and store all U.S. citizens' data in an American-headquartered company. Nevertheless, the legacy data still stands unsecured while in transition.

The Biden administration has now threatened to ban TikTok in the U.S. unless the company's Chinese owners divest their stakes in it. China has firmly opposed any forced sale of TikTok.

As the popular social media company is getting caught in the U.S.-China tensions, Mr. Chew's space as the CEO is shrinking further.

Striking a balance

Conrad Sangma

In a State known for fractured mandates and President's Rule, the NPP leader did not just complete his first term but also returned to power with an improved tally for his party

Rahul Karmakar

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno Agitok Sangma was arguably the first leader from the eight-State northeast with a pan-India appeal. His son Conrad Kongkal Sangma did become a parliamentarian in 2016 after winning the Tura Lok Sabha seat, which his father held from 1997 until his death, with two breaks in between. But he was quick in assessing his strengths and focused on making the National People's Party (NPP) a force to reckon with in the northeast through an "alliance of convenience" with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which his father had initiated. Successful electoral moves and expansion of the party's footprint in the region helped Mr. Conrad emerge from the shadows of his father.

Expanding base

The NPP won only two seats in the 2013 Meghalaya election, contested under Purno Sangma's leadership. Taking over as the NPP president after his father's death in March 2016, the onus was on Conrad Sangma to expand the party's base beyond his home turf – the western half of Meghalaya comprising the Garo Hills.

The 2017 Manipur election gave him the opportunity to test the waters and take the NPP's friendship with the BJP forward. The NPP won four of the 20 seats it contested and helped the BJP, which had won 10 seats fewer than the majority mark of 31, form a coalition government headed by Nongthombam Biren Singh. Under his stewardship, the party also won five seats in the 2019 Arunachal Pradesh election and backed the BJP government headed by Pema Khandu.

The Manipur experiment paid dividends after a hung verdict in the 2018 Meghalaya election. The BJP was among four parties that aligned with the NPP to stop the Congress, the single-largest party with 21 seats, from forming the government. Mr. Conrad's first term as the Chief Minister was not always smooth. He weathered bursts of violence over an unresolved conflict between Dalit Sikhs and the local people in the State capital Shillong, communal tensions triggered by protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, a public outcry after the killing of a former extremist and miscreants attacking pedestrians during a rally demanding jobs. He managed to tide over accusations of large-scale corruption in power, education and other sectors, besides sitting over illegal coal mining and transportation.

Full-term CM

However, he pulled off something deemed difficult in a State used to fractured mandates and President's Rule – completing a term. He also defied naysayers to not only take charge for the second successive term but also help the NPP improve its tally from 19 five years ago to 26 this year.

After the election results, the BJP and the other allies-turned-rivals lost no time in rekindling the friendship for the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance 2.0, though the Congress and the Trinamool Congress made an unsuccessful bid to form an alternative government with regional parties.

Mr. Conrad, an MBA who studied at the Wharton School of Business in Pennsylvania and the Imperial College in the U.K., learnt the political ropes as his father's campaign manager in the 1990s. But his electoral journey began with a failure – he lost his first Assembly election in 2004 by 182 votes. The loss, those close to him say, primed him for a calculated approach to elections by weighing his options and perfecting the art of balancing between the interest of the NPP and that of allies, primarily the BJP.

The balancing act saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah attend his swearing-in ceremony days after calling Meghalaya one of the most corrupt States, during the BJP's campaign. Mr. Conrad has also honed the skill of attacking the BJP without going overboard and taking a backseat on certain occasions.

Maintaining a balance has also seen him become more acceptable across the Khasi and Jaintia Hills – the two regions of Meghalaya temperamentally different from the Garo Hills – and find time for holidaying with his doctor wife and two daughters from time to time.

INBRIEF

Jio installs 1 lakh towers to roll out 'fastest' 5G network

Reliance Jio has installed close to 1 lakh telecom towers, nearly 5 times of its nearest competitor, to roll out India's fastest and deepest penetration 5G telecom network to provide ultra-high speed Internet, according to DoT data. The latest daily status report from telecommunication department's National EMF Portal shows Jio has installed 99,897 BTS (base transceiver station) across 2 frequencies it owns. In comparison, Bharti Airtel has 22,219 BTS. PTI

TII, Premji Invest ally to buy Lotus Surgicals for ₹348 crore

Tube Investments of India Ltd (TII) and Premji Invest on Saturday signed a share purchase agreement to acquire Lotus Surgicals from India Medical Consumables Holdings Ltd. for ₹348 crore. TII will acquire 67% while Premji Invest will acquire the balance 33% of the company. Currently, Lotus is engaged in the business of wound closure products. The acquisition is seen as the first step for TII and PI to set up a medtech platform for affordable medical products.

Avalon IPO filing shows focus on clean energy, technology

Avalon Technologies Ltd., an electronic manufacturing services company, is planning to focus on high-growth clean energy and emerging communication technologies sectors, according to a Red Herring Prospectus filed with SEBI. The company's IPO is scheduled to open on April 3 and will close on April 6, 2023. Avalon proposes to utilise the net IPO proceeds towards, among other things, prepayment of all or a portion of certain outstanding borrowings.

AMCs pitch debt funds for one last week

Some fund houses are urging clients to invest in hybrid debt funds before March 31 since the change in tax treatment is set to start from April 1; AMCs suggest investors make portfolio reallocations, including to international funds, to avail of the existing indexation benefit for tax purposes

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

While just a few asset management companies (AMCs) have officially reacted to the surprise tax setback for the popular hybrid debt mutual funds category, which was brought in through amendments to the Finance Bill on Friday, some AMCs are urging clients to make the most of the final week's window by investing more into such funds before March 31.

As per changes introduced to the tax laws that will kick in on April 1, debt mutual funds with up to 35% of the portfolio invested in domestic equities, will no longer enjoy indexation benefits for tax purposes, even if held for more than three years. Capital gains from debt funds, international funds and gold funds, irrespective of holding period, will be taxed at an individual's applicable tax rate as short-term capital gains.

"With this change, debt funds and traditional investments will now see parity in taxation," Axis AMC, which manages Axis MF schemes, said in a statement on Saturday, stressing that existing investments and those made on or before March 31 would not be affected by the tax tweaks. "The comparison between such opportunities will rest largely on performance," it added.

"One caveat for existing investors through this news flow remains, that of existing investments in debt funds, international funds and gold funds, and even new investments made in them until March 31... will continue to attract long-term capital gains taxation once they complete three years. Investors could revisit their portfolio and reallocate funds towards debt and global funds to optimise their portfolios," the AMC said.

Hard sell

AMCs are asking clients to use the period before the new tax regime kicks in by shuffling investments

- Parliament passed the Finance Bill with the amendments on Friday
- Debt MFs with up to 35% invested in local equities will no longer enjoy indexation benefits even if held for over 3 years
- Capital gains from debt, global and gold funds will be taxed as short-term capital gains

Straightforward pitch

PPFAS Asset Management, which manages the Parag Parikh Conservative Hybrid Fund that predominantly invests in debt to generate regular income, while offering its investors long-term capital appreciation from equity investments, made a more straightforward pitch in a communique on Friday.

"Given that, all investments undertaken before March 31, 2023, will continue to enjoy LTCG and Indexation benefits, we suggest you undertake your investment such that the allotment process is completed by March 31... which in turn will lead you being able to avail of the current regime of 20% capital gains tax after availing of the indexation benefit," it said.

"Existing investments should also be retained as long as possible as they will continue to enjoy the current, concessional long term capital gains tax rate," PPFAS added.

'Nissan posted 23% production growth despite supply crises'

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has registered 23% growth in production for the first 11 months of FY23 despite numerous supply chain issues, said Managing Director Rakesh Srivastava.

"FY23 was challenging with supply constraints leading to semiconductor shortages," he said.

"But as of February 2023, Nissan produced over 83,000 units with a growth of 23%," the MD said in an interaction.

According to Mr. Srivastava, in the last two years, the automobile sector faced several sequential crises, including shortage of semiconductors.

Rakesh Srivastava

"So, we created a special mitigation plan with a cross functional taskforce to work with global teams and supply chain partners to strengthen our supply chain, particularly in terms of semiconductor availability to meet the market demand," he said.

On the supply side, Nissan also faced challenges in terms of rising cost of commodities and input costs. "Despite these pressures, our price hikes have been far lower than the price increases taken by competitive models as we took multiple initiatives with supply chain partners to manage rising costs," he noted. At the time of delivery, cars were given at the booking price, absorbing all cost increases, he said.

Tax fallout: Quant Mutual 'repositions' new fund offer

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Quant Mutual Fund, which had just this Thursday introduced a new fund offer (NFO) for a Dynamic Asset Allocation Fund (DAAF) that would invest a minimum of 65% in equities and up to 35% in debt, has been compelled to change tack almost overnight due to the changes brought to debt funds' taxation.

"The fund was initially intended for risk-averse investors, with an equally low risk appetite for volatility, preferring fixed income returns. Therefore, the scheme was endeavoring to deliver superior returns than fixed deposits with a high quality debt oriented portfolio," the fund house said in a communique late Friday.

Change in plans

In its previous communications, the fund house had said the new scheme would benefit long-term investors by rendering the difference between debt and equity taxation to "an insignificant 66 basis points (0.66%) over a five-year holding period, due to indexation benefit on long term capital gains."

But with the amended Finance Bill making income from debt mutual fund schemes taxable at income tax rates applicable to an individual's income tax slab, quant Mutual Fund said "this has significantly affected our earlier positioning and consequently the strategy of quant DAAF from a taxation perspective".

"In view of this impact, we have unanimously decided to reposition the quant DAAF and modify its taxation from debt to equity due to said amendments to the Finance Bill, 2023," the firm said, adding that the investment strategy for the scheme is being amended suitably.

MSMEs not static, but growing in size, asserts FinMin; industry demurs

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has sought to dismiss the "narrative" that India's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are stagnating, citing data that it asserts shows smaller firms evolving into larger units in recent years. However, industry representatives are not sure the numbers have been correctly interpreted by the Ministry.

In its recent monthly economic review for February, the ministry had said the number of micro units graduating to small units had increased to 65,140 in 2022-23, from 28,881 in 2021-22, "belying the narrative that MSME units suffer from the inertia of rest and are reluctant to be upwardly mobile".

"Among the major States, Bihar, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha... have displayed encouraging results, scoring way above the country average," the Ministry noted. "The number of 'small' units elevating themselves to the 'medium' category has also increased significantly, by 75%, from 3,699 in FY22 to 6,474 in FY23. These upwardly mobile units are from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka," it added.

Size matters: There is evidence of upward inter-category mobility among manufacturing and service units, says Ministry. K. PICHUMANI

Acknowledging that the MSME sector played a vital role in the economy, with a share of 26.8% in the overall Gross-Value Added (GVA) and 38.5% of manufacturing GVA, as of 2020-21, the Ministry said the sector's contribution was not just quantitatively significant but also qualitative in cultivating an entrepreneurial culture.

"There is evidence of upward inter-category mobility among manufacturing, service and trading units. The significant chunk comes from the manufacturing sector, which is reassuring, given the higher employment-generating potential of this sector."

It noted that 53% of the units graduating from "micro" to 'small' were manufacturing units in 2021-22, before dropping slightly to 45% in 2022-23. "This trend has been evident in the case of 'small' to 'medium' and 'micro' to 'medium' movements as well, though to a lesser degree," the Ministry concluded.

K.E. Raghunathan, national chairman, Association of Indian Entrepreneurs, who was associated with a recent survey of MSMEs that revealed 72% of MSMEs had stagnated over the last five years, was skeptical of the Ministry's findings. Specifically, he said the Udyam portal was not exhaustive, with only about 20%, or 1.5 crore, of the total MSME units in the country, registered on it.

Udyam portal

The Ministry of MSME had introduced the Udyam Portal in July 2020, enabling MSME firms to register themselves. The Finance Ministry has said the Udyam portal fetches data from the portals of the Income Tax Department and Goods and Services Tax Network and then classifies the registered MSMEs based on data on investment and turnover.

"The Udyam data is wrongly interpreted," Mr. Raghunathan said. "The classification of an applicant into micro, small or medium is by self-declaration and is not taken from the I-T and GST portals as claimed. The registration has been so poor... evident from the fact that the number of MSMEs was 6.15 crore, even as per the old classification," he added.

As per the 2020 investment and turnover norms, a micro unit has an annual turnover of up to ₹5 crore, with investments in plant and machinery of up to ₹1 crore. The turnover threshold is ₹50 crore and ₹250 crore for small and medium enterprises.

RIL names Srikanth as new CFO

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) has appointed Srikanth Venkatachari as Chief Financial Officer effective June 1, according to a stock exchange filing.

He takes over from Alok Agarwal, who has been CFO since 2005, and will now assume the role of senior advisor to company chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani.

Mr. Venkatachari, 57, is currently the joint CFO, sharing a part of the responsibilities with Mr. Agarwal for the last few years.

Sport

Yashini continues to shine as women's seeds have a good day; Preyesh through

NATIONAL TT

K. Keerthivasan
JAMMU

Tamil Nadu's S. Yashini, who shone in the team events, continued her fine form in singles, beating Karnataka's Kushi Vishwanath 11-9, 11-2, 11-5, 6-11, 13-11 to enter the third round of the UTT 84th senior National table tennis championships on Saturday.

All the eight seeds in the women's section – Manika Batra, defending champion Sreeja Akula, Reeth Rishya, Diya Chitale, Sutirtha Mukherjee, Anusha Kutumbale, Swastika Ghosh and Prapti Sen – reached the round of 32.

The 17-year-old Preyesh Suresh Raj, one of the brightest prospects from Tamil Nadu, drubbed Anirban Roy Chowdhury of Karnataka 11-2, 11-8, 11-9 in the men's first round.

Breezing through: Preyesh defeated Anirban in straight games. FILE PHOTO

Top results: Women (second round): Manika Batra (PSPB) bt Sataporni De (WB) 11-2, 11-7, 11-9, 11-6; Diya Chitale (RBI) bt Vanshika Mudgal (Del) 11-5, 11-4, 8-11, 5-11, 11-5; Sutirtha Mukherjee (WB) bt Koushiki Dasgupta (TTFI) 11-4, 11-1, 11-5, 11-5; Anusha Kutumbale bt Bhaavitha Nagulapalli (TS) 11-5, 11-9, 11-1, 13-11; Archana Kamath (PSPB) bt Dipanwita Basu (WB) 12-10, 11-5, 11-4, 11-2; Reeth Rishya (PSPB) bt Ananya Chande (Mah) 11-7, 13-11, 11-7, 11-5.
Sreeja Akula (RBI) bt Smruddhi Kulkarni (Mah) 11-4, 11-5, 11-4, 11-6; S. Yashini (TN) bt Kushi Viswanath (Kar) 11-9, 11-2, 11-5, 6-11, 13-11.
Men (first round): Preyesh Suresh Raj (TN) bt Anirban Roy Chowdhury (Kar) 3-0; K. Yengkhom (Man) bt Satyam Giri Gupta (MP) 3-2.
Utkarsh Gupta (CRSB) bt Suranjit Dey (Meg) 3-0; Chitrax Bhat (Guj) bt Ravindra Kotiyan (RSPB) 3-1; Sushmit Sriram (IA&AD) bt Priyanuj Bhattacharyya (Asm) 3-1.

Six under-15 players among 29 in the leaders' group

DELHI OPEN

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

The performances of several under-15 players have stood out as six of them became part of a 29-player leaders' group with an all-win record after four rounds of the ₹45 lakh Delhi International Open chess here.

Before favourite S.P. Sethuraman overcame some mid-game worries against teenager Apoorv Kamble and second seed Aravindh Chithambaram outplayed Swayham Das, third seed Levan Pantsulaia escaped with a 38-move draw against local teen Daaevik Wadhawan.

Facing Pantsulaia, rated 2597, Daaevik reached an overwhelmingly advantageous position after the Georgian's 35th move.

However, the inexperience of the youngster, rated 1886, came to the fore as he moved his king to a square that allowed Pantsulaia instant counterplay.

Daavik then unleashed three rook-checks on the white king and signed peace in 38 moves.

Among the teen leaders was Mukund Agarwal who stunned GM Saptarshi Roy. The other under-15 leaders were S. Aswath, Arjun Adireddy, Goutham Krishna, Arpith Bijoy and Ajay Santhosh Parvathareddy.

The GMs who have dropped half-a-point to lesser-rated rivals are M.R. Lalith Babu, G.A. Stany, Alexei Fedorov, Deepan Chakkravarthy and Marat Dzhumaev.

Aleksej Aleksandrov, rated 2484 and seeded 12, drew for the second time in as many days after running into N.R. Jaidambareesh, rated 1666.

With over 1000 entries, some of the leading seeded players could face some severe tests only in the second half of this 10-round competition.

Unusual as it is, even in the fifth round, the games between leaders reflect a difference in ratings, ranging from 200 to over 650 points.

India beats Hong Kong, finishes fifth

Sports Bureau

India beat Hong Kong 2-0 and ended fifth in the Asia-Oceania World Junior under-14 girls' tennis tournament in Kuching, Malaysia, on Saturday.

Japan beat Korea 2-0 in the final, and top seed Australia beat Kazakhstan 2-0 in the match for the third place. The top three teams qualified for the World Group competition to be staged later in Europe.

India had lost the quarterfinals to Kazakhstan and thus had lost the race for qualification.

The result (fifth place): India bt Hong Kong 2-0 (Harithashree Venkatesh bt Hu Tung Sze 6-3, 6-3; Maaya Rajeshwaran bt Yui Hei Hebe Leung 5-7, 6-2, [10-4]).

ALL-ROUND SHOW

Nabi stars as Afghanistan stuns Pakistan in T20 series opener

Mohammad Nabi guided Afghanistan to a six-wicket win over Pakistan in the first of a three-game T20I series in Sharjah on Friday. Nabi took two for 12 and made a run-a-ball unbeaten 38.
The scores: Pakistan 92/9 in 20 overs lost to Afghanistan 98/4 in 17.5 overs (Mohammad Nabi 38 n.o.).

DEMOLITION JOB

Shipley tears through Sri Lanka in ODI thrashing

Henry Shipley tore through Sri Lanka's line-up as New Zealand romped to a 198-run win in the first ODI in Auckland on Saturday.
The scores: New Zealand 274 in 49.3 overs (Finn Allen 51, Rachin Ravindra 49, Chamika Karunaratne 4/43) bt Sri Lanka 76 in 19.5 overs (Henry Shipley 5/31).

HUMDINGER

Powell powers West Indies past South Africa in first T20I

West Indies beat South Africa by three wickets with three balls to spare in a rain-shortened first T20I in Centurion on Saturday.
The scores: South Africa 131/8 in 11 overs (David Miller 48, Odean Smith 2/27, S. Cottrell 2/31) lost to West Indies 132/7 in 10.3 overs (Rovman Powell 43 n.o., Sisanda Magala 3/21).

BAG OF TRICKS

Was very focused on what I was going to bowl, says Wong

Mumbai Indians seamer Issy Wong, who made history by taking WPL's first hat-trick (against UP Warriorz in the Eliminator), said she was focused on what she was going to bowl and made sure she executed it, when asked about the ball that completed the feat. She said her spell of four for 15 was "right up there".

Double delight: Nitu and Saweety made it a memorable Saturday for the Indian fans with a remarkable display. R.V. MOORTHY

Nitu, Saweety punch their way to World titles in contrasting style

Former puts on a stupendous show to blank Mongolia's Altantsetseg in the 48kg final, while the latter gets the better of China's Lina through a bout review in the 81kg summit clash much to the delight of the faithful

BOXING

Y.B. Sarangi
NEW DELHI

Promising youngster Nitu Ghanghas and experienced hand Saweety Boora boxed out of their skin to overcome tough opponents in the 48kg and 81kg finals and claim their maiden titles in the World women's boxing championships at the K.D. Jadhav Hall here on Saturday.

While Commonwealth Games champion and double World youth champion Nitu recorded a 5-0 victory over two-time Asian bronze medallist Altantsetseg Lutsaikhan of Mongolia, Asian champion Saweety stunned 2018 champion Lina Wang 4-3, through bout review, to keep her promise of improving upon her 2014 Worlds silver medal this time.

After the 2006 edition, this is the second occasion when Indian boxers have secured more than one gold medal.

Early initiative

Nitu attacked quickly to push the Mongolian on the back foot. The alert Indian southpaw delivered right-left combinations to win the first round.

When Altantsetseg tried to catch up, Nitu kept her cool despite falling down a few times in the physical second round.

The Indian was penalised for holding but still won the round 3-2.

The Mongolian showed more aggression even as the Bhiwani girl scored through counters.

Altantsetseg paid the price for her rough game when she was punished for pushing. Practically it ended her chance of a comeback.

Amidst wild celebrations by the spectators, an emotional Nitu was patted on the back by chief coach Bhaskar Bhatt and carried on her shoulders by coach Pranamika Bora.

A word of compliment from fellow World and Olympic medallist and fellow Bhiwani boxer Vijender Singh was a bonus for the 22-year-old.

"I feel very proud. I can't thank my head coach Bhaskar Bhatt enough. Before the fight I wanted to be aggressive, but during the fight my coaches asked me to counterattack," said Nitu.

In the other final, against the taller Chinese, Saweety gained by applying her plan of moving in and landing rapid fire shots.

Even as Lina returned the favour through clean counters, the home boxer took the first two rounds with an identical 3-2 margin.

In the third round, which witnessed a lot of physical tussle, Saweety, despite falling twice, matched her opponent to emerge as the winner.

In a bizarre development, the organisers apologised for playing the wrong anthem during the 70kg medal ceremony, featuring Russian winner Anastasiia Demurchian, and later played the correct anthem with the Russian champion standing alone on the podium.

The results (finals):

48kg: Nitu Ghanghas bt Altantsetseg Lutsaikhan (Mgl) 5-0; **52kg:** Yu Wu (Chn) bt Sirine Charaabi (Ita) 5-0; **57kg:** Irma Testa (Ita) bt Karina Ibragimova (Kaz) 5-0; **63kg:** Chengyu Yang (Chn) bt Nataliya Sychugova (Rus) 4-1; **70kg:** Anastasiia Demurchian (Rus) bt Kaye Scott (Aus) 5-0; **81kg:** Saweety Boora bt Lina Wang (Chn) 4-3.

Evenly-matched DC, MI will dearly want a piece of history

Battle of equals: Irrespective of who between Lanning and Harmanpreet lays her hands on the trophy, the final could see sparks flying. SPORTZPICS/WPL

WPL

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MUMBAI

It didn't take Mumbai Indians or Delhi Capitals long to let the world know that they were the two best sides in the inaugural edition of the Women's Premier League. So it is only fair that the title will go to one of them.

Will it be Meg Lanning's Delhi Capitals, or Harmanpreet Kaur's Mumbai Indians? The Brabourne Stadium will provide the answer on Sunday night.

There will be a full house – the tickets for the final have been sold out – to witness the first ever champion of the WPL.

The majority of the spectators will want MI to triumph and carry forward the men's team's legacy in the IPL, which it has won five times.

Delhi Capitals' men never won it. Its women have an excellent opportunity to bring the cup home.

The Delhi side entered the final in style.

It had tied on points with MI but topped the table on account of a better net run-rate.

MI had to come through the Eliminator against UP Warriorz.

When MI and Capitals met in the league phase, both the games were one-sided, with the former winning by eight wickets and the latter by nine.

If Lanning is the holder of the orange cap (310 runs, average 51.66, strike-rate 141.55), and has formed the tournament's best opening partnership with Shafali Verma (strike-rate 182.57), four of the top five bowlers are from Mumbai Indians: Saika Ishaque (15 wickets), Amelia Kerr (13), Hayley Matthews (13) and Issy Wong (12).

Quality all-rounders

Kerr and Matthews are also part of a formidable list of MI all-rounders, headed by the magnificent Nat Sciver-Brunt. Capitals also boasts one of the world's leading all-rounders in Marizanne Kapp.

It also has the exciting young, hard-hitting all-rounder Alice Capsey. Kapp, Shikha Pandey and Jess Jonassen have been amongst the wickets.

The final should be a closer affair than the earlier meetings. The WPL deserves it.

Nikhat to represent India in 2023 Asian Games: Dunne

Jonathan Selvaraj
NEW DELHI

Nikhat Zareen will represent India at the 2023 Asian Games, the first qualification event for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Bernard Dunne, who was last year appointed high performance director for the Indian boxing teams, confirmed this at a press conference at the IBA Boxing World Championships on Saturday.

Nikhat, the Commonwealth Games Champion in the 50kg category, earned the right to compete at the Asian Games by virtue of reaching the final of the World Championships in the light flyweight category after beating Rio bronze medallist Ingrid Valencia in the semifinals.

Selection for the Asian Games would give competitors a first shot at qualifying for the Paris Games.

According to the International Olympic committee's qualification criteria for boxing at the 2024 Olympics, the top four finishers in the women's 50kg category at the Hangzhou Asian Games, scheduled to be held in September, will qualify for the Paris Olympics.

Dunne. ANI

Selection policy

The selection policy posted on the Boxing Federation of India website, states "...The athlete who medal (Gold/Silver) at the World Championship 2023 will have an automatic selection for the Asian games 2023 (first Olympic qualifier) in that particular weight category".

"Those who have won gold or silver here (the world championships) in an Olympic weight category are the automatic selection for the Asian Games.

"We have no plans to change the selection policy right now," said Dunne.

Dunne's statement also meant that Lovlina Borgohain, who reached the final of the 75kg middleweight category, will be India's representative at the Asian Games.

Nitu has a chance

Dunne said that while Nikhat was the automatic pick for the Asian Games, there was still a possibility for Nitu.

"Anything could happen. God forbid someone could pick up an injury or break a hand or leg. At that time our number 2 and 3 boxers have to be ready.

"If you are called upon, you need to be ready. Nikhat is the first pick but Nitu could compete for that No. 2," Dunne said.

Mbappe delivers for France

EURO QUALIFIERS

Associated Press
PARIS

Kylian Mbappe delivered for France again, this time wearing the captain's armband. He slotted home two unforgiving finishes to headline a 4-0 win over Netherlands in European Football Championship qualifying on Friday.

Meanwhile, Romelu Lukaku underlined his enduring value to Belgium by scoring all three goals in a 3-0 win at Sweden.

The results:

Group B: France 4 (Griezmann 2, Upamecano 8, Mbappe 21, 88) bt Netherlands 0; Gibraltar 0 lost to Greece 3 (Masouras 11, Siopis 45, Bakasetas 58); **Group E:** Czech Republic 3 (Krejci 1, Cvancara 3, Kuchta 64) bt Poland 1 (Szymanski 87); **Group F:** Sweden 0 lost to Belgium 3 (Lukaku 35, 49, 83); Austria 4 (Sabitzer 28, 50, Gregoritsch 29, Baumgartner 69) bt Azerbaijan 1 (Makhmudov 64). **Group G:** Bulgaria 0 lost to Montenegro 1 (N. Krstovic 70); Serbia 2 (Tadic 16, Vlahovic 53) bt Lithuania 0.

Lanning's Capitals hope to cash in on 'Kapp impact'

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MUMBAI

Marizanne Kapp has made a huge impact at the WPL. But, that was almost inevitable.

She was Player-of-the-Match in The Hundred finals in England, in 2021 and 2022; so also in the WBBL 2021-22 final. She thus played key roles in making Oval Invincibles and Perth Scorchers champions. Delhi Capitals must be hoping Kapp does her special thing once again.

The South African has to her credit 3,545 runs and 223 wickets in international white-ball cricket.

She has the WPL's best bowling figures – her five for 15 was an exceptional spell against Gujarat Giants – and in her six innings, she went past 30 four times. She has done all that while going through emotional turmoil. Her South African teammate and life partner Dane van Niekerk – she was signed up by RCB – recently announced her retirement from international cricket.

Vital cog: Kapp has played a big part in Capitals' campaign. EMMANUAL YOGINI

"RCB has been so good to her and everyone would have loved to see her on the park, but just being here and finding her feet again was helpful for her," said Kapp in an exclusive interview with *The Hindu*.

"We both made our international debut in 2009 and here we are. Even though she is only 29, she has been playing for 14 years. She hopefully will continue to play in these leagues."

Kapp is enjoying her time at the WPL and is glad to be part of Capitals.

"Ours is such a well-balanced side and credit has to go to the people who have put together this team after a lot of research," she said. "The major thing is that a lot of players are contributing."

A clash of the Titanesses!

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

The WPL final brings face to face two of the most influential players in women's cricket. What Meg Lanning and Harmanpreet have done for the game in their respective countries – Australia and India – cannot be overstated.

On the eve of the final, Harmanpreet admitted Capitals posed a challenge in the form of Lanning and her opening partner Shafali Verma. "They have the best opening combination in the tournament," she said. "We know what they can do but have plans."

About being at the receiving end as India captain facing Lanning's Australia in major finals, Harmanpreet said the occasion was different this time.

Lanning said MI would be a big challenge. "I think both Mumbai and Delhi have been very consistent," she said. "We know how dangerous they can be... it's a high pressure game."

INBRIEF

Satwik-Chirag duo enters the final of the Swiss Open

The second-seeded Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty overcame Malaysian third seeds Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi 21-19, 17-21, 21-17 in 69 minutes to make the summit clash of the Swiss Open Super Series 300 badminton in Basel on Saturday. The Indians had got past the Danish duo of Jeppe Bay and Lasse Molhede 15-21, 21-11, 21-14 in the quarterfinals.

RITU RAJ KONWAR

Kairat's late strike helps Kyrgyzstan hold Myanmar

Kyrgyzstan found the equaliser in the final minute of injury-time to hold Myanmar 1-1 in the second match of the tri-nation football tournament at Imphal on Saturday. Aung Thu put Myanmar ahead in the 82nd minute before Kyrgyzstan netted the equaliser through Zhyrgalbek Kairat. Host India, which had beaten Myanmar 1-0 in the opener, only needs a draw against Kyrgyzstan on March 28 to win the trophy. Myanmar, with just a draw, was knocked out of the race.

The result: Myanmar 1 (Aung Thu 82) drew with Kyrgyzstan 1 (Zhyrgalbek Kairat 90+5). **Amitabha Das Sharma**

Tuchel is new Bayern Munich coach after Nagelsmann firing

Bayern Munich announced on Friday it had appointed former Chelsea and PSG oach Thomas Tuchel as new boss after firing Julian Nagelsmann. Bayern said Tuchel would receive a contract until June 2025 and supervise training for the first time on Monday.

Gracheva stuns Jabeur; Sakkari and Garcia also out

Fourth seed Ons Jabeur crashed out of the Miami Open on Friday, losing her opening match to Russian qualifier Varvara Gracheva 6-2, 6-2. In another surprise, Canadian Bianca Andreescu overcame seventh seed Maria Sakkari of Greece 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, while Romania's Sorana Cirstea upset World No. 4 Caroline Garcia of France 6-2, 6-3 in a repeat of Indian Wells.

Prachi crowned new women's National Epee champion

Haryana's Prachi Lohan out-duelled State-mate Tanisha Khatri 15-14 in a close final to win the women's Epee title at the 33rd senior National fencing championship in Pune on Saturday.

Short to replace Bairstow in Punjab Kings squad

Jonny Bairstow will miss the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League due to an injury. Punjab Kings made an announcement on their social media handle about Bairstow's absence on Saturday. "We regret to inform you that Jonny Bairstow will not be a part of the IPL this season because of his injury. "We wish him the best and look forward to seeing him in our colours next season. We are pleased to welcome Matthew Short as his replacement in the squad." Short was the 'Player of the Tournament' during the 2022-23 Big Bash League, representing Adelaide Strikers.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Jio Cinema App, 6.30 a.m.

BWF: Swiss Open (final), Jio Cinema App, 2.30 p.m.

South Africa vs West Indies: 2nd T20I, SS Select 1 (SD & HD), Hotstar & FanCode, 5.30 p.m.

Women's Boxing World Championships: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30 p.m.

Euro 2024 Qualifiers: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & Sony Ten 1, 2 & 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.15 a.m. (Monday)

WPL: Final, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App30 p.m.

Afghanistan vs Pakistan: 2nd T20I, FanCode, 9.30 p.m.

Rajasthan Royals looks capable of reclaiming the crown it once wore

The surprise winner of the inaugural edition will be looking to put behind it the disappointment of last season's loss in the final

IPL-16 COUNTDOWN

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Rajasthan Royals has contested the IPL final only twice. Fourteen years separated those two title-clashes.

After emerging surprise winner of the inaugural edition, the next four seasons saw Royals going out in the league stage. When Royals reached the final last year, it marked the end of a long wait for fans.

They were, however, in for a big disappointment, as Royals went down to Hardik Pandya's Gujarat Titans, which emerged champion in its maiden season. Yet, for a team that had not qualified for the playoffs in three previous years, making the final was an achievement to be proud of.

Ten months later, the Royals should be in a confident frame of mind as they gear up for a new season of cricket's biggest soap opera. The unavailability of seamer Prasidh Krishna, because of injury, is a concern – he was the side's second highest wicket-taker last year – and it would be interesting to see how the team management addresses the issue.

The new Impact Player rule may lessen the negative impact (pun unintended).

No replacement has been announced yet for Prasidh, and pictures of Sandeep Sharma apparently in Jaipur have got social media wondering. Obed McCoy has definitely joined the Royals camp, ending the speculation in the wake of his omission from the West Indies team for the T20I series against South Africa.

Milestone beckons Boult

The Royals pace attack will be spearheaded by Trent Boult, the excellent left-arm quick from New Zealand who should be looking to take his 100th IPL wicket (he needs only eight more). Navdeep Saini, Kuldeep Sen, Kuldip Yadav and K.M. Asif are the options for coach Kumar Sangakkara in the absence of Prasidh.

As for spin, the Royals boast arguably the IPL's most formidable pair in R. Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal, the winner of the purple cap last year with 27 wickets. The slow bowling department is further strengthened by Adam Zampa and M. Ashwin.

The batting oozes class. Royals will want Jos Buttler to bat the way he did last season, in which he won the orange cap in some style. Yashasvi Jaiswal, the left-handed opener who has been on fire in the domestic season, could be the ideal foil for the England superstar.

Runs are expected to flow freely and majestically from skipper Sanju Samson's bat yet again. He will want to lead from the front once more.

Classy back-up

Devdutt Padikkal offers assuredness, while Shimron Hetmyer can be explosive as a finisher. There is class in the back-up, too – Joe Root, who may have surprised many with his strike rate in the recent International League T20.

Jason Holder and Riyan Parag can contribute with their all-round skills.

In short, Rajasthan Royals has the team to aim for a place in the playoffs and beyond.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Game-Changer

Jos Buttler has been scoring heavily and quickly for Rajasthan Royals season after season ever since he joined the team in 2018. He was in astonishing form last year, scoring four hundreds and equalling Virat Kohli's record set in 2016. Buttler smashed 863 runs — 247 more than the league's second highest scorer — at an average of 57.53 and a strike-rate of 149.05. He is destructive, but dependable too. And he can bat deep. The longer he stays, the better Royals' chances will be.

The Dugout

Sanju Samson (Capt.), Jos Buttler, Joe Root, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Devdutt Padikkal, Shimron Hetmyer, Riyan Parag, Jason Holder, R. Ashwin, Trent Boult, Yuzvendra Chahal, Navdeep Saini, Obed McCoy, Adam Zampa, Kuldeep Sen, Kuldip Yadav, Prasidh Krishna, K.C. Cariappa, Donovan Ferreira, Dhruv Jurel, K.M. Asif, M. Ashwin, Akash Vashisht, Kunal Rathore and Abdul Basith.

Champion
2008

RAJASTHAN ROYALS' 2023 FIXTURES

April 2	vs. SRH	3.30 p.m.	Hyderabad
April 5	vs. PBKS	7.30 p.m.	Guwahati
April 8	vs. DC	3.30 p.m.	Guwahati
April 12	vs. CSK	7.30 p.m.	Chennai
April 16	vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
April 19	vs. LSG	7.30 p.m.	Jaipur
April 23	vs. RCB	3.30 p.m.	Bengaluru
April 27	vs. CSK	7.30 p.m	Jaipur
April 30	vs. MI	7.30 p.m.	Mumbai
May 5	vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Jaipur
May 7	vs. SRH	7.30 p.m.	Jaipur
May 11	vs. KKR	7.30 p.m.	Kolkata
May 14	vs. RCB	3.30 p.m.	Jaipur
May 19	vs. PBKS	7.30 p.m.	Dharamsala

Jos Buttler

Manu rediscovers form, clinches 25m sports pistol bronze

ISSF WORLD CUP

Santadeep Dey
BHOPAL

Two years is quite a long time. For Manu Bhaker, the duration would have seemed longer.

When the 21-year-old shooter waved at the crowd after the 25m sports pistol event during the ongoing ISSF World Cup, relief was writ large on her face.

Finally, she had her hands on a World Cup medal again. The last one, a silver, had come in Osijek on June 26, 2021. This time, the colour is bronze, but she couldn't care less.

Manu had been firing blanks for a while now, most recently during the 10m air pistol qualification round at the same competition, when she shot 568-19x to finish 16th. In the third series, she shot four 8s and three 9s to manage a mere 89.

Focused: Manu rallied remarkably well after a mediocre start. A.M. FARUQUI

Saturday's story ran a different course. Manu, having finished third in qualification with 584 (290 in precision stage and 294 in rapid), accumulated 14 points in the first ranking match. She was, in fact, tied on points with eventual gold medallist Doreen Vennekamp of Germany.

In the medal match, things got tense as Manu started her first series of five shots with only two hits to find herself at the very bottom of the pile. However, in the second series, she missed only one.

After 15 shots, Manu was yet to make the double digits, stuck on a sorry 9. China's Xiong Yaxuan, placed immediately above her, was on 10 points.

In the next set of competition shots, the eight-time World Cup gold medallist showed what she is made of as she pocketed all the five points on offer. Not only did she surpass Yaxuan, but she had also established a two-point gap in between.

Off her last series, Manu registered four, but Du Ziyue, the other Chinese shooter in fray, was up to the task. Vennekamp, a crowd favourite at the MP State Shooting Academy, missed only 10 of 40 shots to clinch gold.

The results:

50m rifle 3 positions: Men: 1. Du Linshu (Chn), 2. Istvan Peni (Hun), 3. Jan Lochbihler (Sui); **25m sports pistol: Women:** 1. Doreen Vennekamp (Ger), 2. Du Ziyue (Chn), 3. Manu Bhaker (Ind).

Lorenzo Scalise takes over at the top

GOLF

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

An excellent seven-under 65 third round powered Italy's Lorenzo Scalise to the sole lead in the $3,00,000 Duncan Taylor Black Bull Challenge at the Karnataka Golf Association here on Saturday.

Om Prakash Chouhan, Victor Pastor, Ashley Chesters, and Rikard Karlberg trail the leader Scalise (15-under 201) by two shots.

India's Om Prakash carded a six-under 66 to move up 11 spots. Aman Raj (10-under 206) sits in ninth place.

Scalise excelled on the 17th hole, when he forced his way out of a tough spot to land on the green. Stuck behind trees, the 27-year-old from Monza found the gap, and used the wind to hook the ball near the hole.

Scalise is fine form this season, having finished tied-third and tied-fifth in his previous two European Challenge Tour events.

Om Prakash, a seven-time winner on the PGTI, had an up and down day. Om Prakash made a birdie and an eagle on the 10th and 11th holes, but slipped up with a double bogey on the 12th where he found the hazard.

Om Prakash moved up 11 spots to be tied second. GETTY IMAGES

Om Prakash then made four birdies in the last five holes to finish on a high.

"After a good start, the double-bogey on the 12th was quite disappointing. But fortunately, I didn't let that affect my game," Om Prakash said.

India's Aryan Roopa Anand lies tied 17th, while Udayan Mane and Khalin Joshi are tied-43rd and tied 61st respectively.

The scores (top eight): 201: Lorenzo Scalise (Ita) (68, 68, 65); **203:** Om Prakash Chouhan (Ind) (70, 67, 66), Victor Pastor (Esp) (72, 64, 67), Ashley Chesters (Eng) (67, 68, 68), Rikard Karlberg (Swe) (68, 66, 69); **205:** Niall Kearney (Irl) (68, 71, 66), Craig Howie (Sco) (69, 69, 67), Oliver Farr (Wal) (64, 71, 70).

Purav-Divij duo to take on Anirudh-Prashanth pair for the title in Spanish Challenger

Sports Bureau

Purav Raja and Divij Sharan beat the second seeds Marco Bortolotti and Sergio Gornes to set up a title clash against another Indian team of Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar Prashanth in the €73,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Les Franqueses Del Valles, Spain.

The results: €73,000 Challenger, Les Franqueses Del Valles, Spain: Doubles: Semifinals: Anirudh Chandrasekar & Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Jay Clarke (GBr) & Lorenzo Giustino (Ita) 7-5, 6-2; Purav Raja & Divij Sharan bt Marco Bortolotti (Ita) & Sergio Gornes (Esp) 6-2, 7-6(4).

$15,000 ITF, Monastir, Tunisia: Men: Singles (first round): Alexandre Aubriot (Fra) bt Manas Dhamne 6-3, 6-0.

Women: Singles (first round): Nina Radovanovic (Fra) bt Jennifer Luikham 7-5, 6-0.

Doubles (quarterfinals): Arabella Koller (Aut) & Anja Wildgruber (Ger) bt Jennifer Luikham & Yang Yidi (Chn) 6-2, 6-4.

$118,000 Challenger, Biel, Switzerland: Doubles: Semifinals: Victor Cornea (Rou) & Franko Skugor (Cro) bt Sriram Balaji & Ramkumar Ramanathan 7-5, 6-3.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

KIOC's summer cricket camp from April 1

Karnataka Institute of Cricket (KIOC) will conduct its annual summer camp for boys and girls at the RBANM's Main Ground (near Commercial Street) from April 1 until the opening of schools and colleges.

For registrations, visit the camp office at RBANM's Main Ground or call: 9008675618 / 7022600150 or visit: *www.kioc.net*.

Double delight for Shrabani

Shrabani Das of West Bengal secured two gold medals, in the 59kg senior and junior categories, at the Khelo India Youth, Junior & Senior National-ranking women's weightlifting tournament here.

The results (winners all): Senior: 59kg: Popy Hazarika (RSPB) 181kg.

55kg: Shrabani Das (Ben) 178kg; **45kg:** Komal Kohar (RSPB) 150kg.

Youth: 59kg: Sumitra Mallik (Odi) 131kg; **55kg:** Khushi Kumari (Bih) 154kg; **49kg:** Mina Santa (Odi) 135kg.

40kg: Vinatai Ahar (Mah) 131kg; **45kg:** Mina Singh (Odi) 128kg.

Junior: 59kg: Sonam Singh (U.P.) 177kg; **55kg:** Shrabani Das (Ben) 178kg.

49kg: Harshada Sharad Garud (Mah) 161kg; **45kg:** Rini Nayak (M.P.) 140kg.

Sasha nets four as BFC swamps Shooterz

Sasha Chawla scored four times as BFC thrashed Shooterz FC 11-0 in the Khelo India under-17 girls league here on Saturday.

The results: BFC 11 (Chinmayi Tili 3, Hasvika Sridharan 10, Amulya (OG) 11, Sasha Chawla 23, 26, 28, 45, Sila Adarsh 29, Rinsha Mariyam 43, Annika Navaneet Prakash 45, Rakshitha Vijay 46) bt Shooterz FC 0; Kemp FC 2 (Advika Kanojia 24, Anaya Susan Thomas 26) bt GRK FC 0.

Paine hints at coaching role post retirement

Press Trust of India
HOBART

Former Australia Test skipper Tim Paine has indicated that he is likely to take up a coaching job following his retirement from all forms of cricket.

Paine, who captained Australia in 23 Tests following his elevation to the post in the wake of the 2018 ball-tampering saga in Cape Town, had stepped down as skipper days before the start of the 2021-22 Ashes series at home when he was accused of sending lewd text messages to a Cricket Tasmania official earlier on in his career.

Paine, 38, played his last domestic career game for Tasmania against Queensland in Sheffield Shield here last week.